

**Fishery Management Report for the Recreational  
Fisheries of the Upper Copper/Upper Susitna River  
Management Area, 2014**

by

**Mark A. Somerville**

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December 2016

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Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Divisions of Sport Fish and Commercial Fisheries



## Symbols and Abbreviations

The following symbols and abbreviations, and others approved for the Système International d'Unités (SI), are used without definition in the following reports by the Divisions of Sport Fish and of Commercial Fisheries: Fishery Manuscripts, Fishery Data Series Reports, Fishery Management Reports, and Special Publications. All others, including deviations from definitions listed below, are noted in the text at first mention, as well as in the titles or footnotes of tables, and in figure or figure captions.

| Weights and measures (metric)           |                       | General                                   |  | Mathematics, statistics   |                         |     |
|---|-----------------------|---|--|---|-------------------------|-----|
| centimeter                              | cm                    | Alaska Administrative Code                | AAC  | all standard mathematical signs, symbols and abbreviations                    |                         |     |
| deciliter                               | dL                    | all commonly accepted abbreviations       | e.g., Mr., Mrs., AM, PM, etc.                    | alternate hypothesis  | H <sub>A</sub>          |     |
| gram                                    | g                     | all commonly accepted professional titles | e.g., Dr., Ph.D., R.N., etc.                     | base of natural logarithm   | <i>e</i>                |     |
| hectare                                 | ha                    |   |  | catch per unit effort   | CPUE                    |     |
| kilogram                                | kg                    |   |  | coefficient of variation  | CV                      |     |
| kilometer                               | km                    | at compass directions:                    | @  | common test statistics  | (F, t, $\chi^2$ , etc.) |     |
| liter                                   | L                     |   |  | confidence interval   | CI                      |     |
| meter                                   | m                     |   |  | correlation coefficient (multiple)  | R                       |     |
| milliliter                              | mL                    | east                                      | E  | correlation coefficient (simple)  | r                       |     |
| millimeter                              | mm                    | north                                     | N  | covariance  | cov                     |     |
| Weights and measures (English)          |                       | south                                     | S  | degree (angular )   | °                       |     |
|   | cubic feet per second | ft³/s                                     | west   | degrees of freedom  | df                      |     |
|   | foot                  | ft  | copyright  | expected value  | <i>E</i>                |     |
|   | gallon                | gal                                       | corporate suffixes:                              | greater than  | >                       |     |
|   | inch                  | in  | Company  | greater than or equal to  | ≥                       |     |
|   | mile                  | mi  | Corporation                                      | harvest per unit effort   | HPUE                    |     |
|   | nautical mile         | nmi                                       | Incorporated                                     | less than   | <                       |     |
|   | ounce                 | oz  | Limited  | less than or equal to   | ≤                       |     |
|   | pound                 | lb  | District of Columbia                             | logarithm (natural)   | ln                      |     |
|   | quart                 | qt  | et alii (and others)                             | et al.  | logarithm (base 10)     | log |
| yard                                    | yd                    | et cetera (and so forth)                  | etc.   | logarithm (specify base)  | log <sub>2</sub> , etc. |     |
| Time and temperature                    |                       | exempli gratia (for example)              | e.g.   | minute (angular)  | '                       |     |
|   | day                   | d   | Federal Information Code                         | not significant   | NS                      |     |
|   | degrees Celsius       | °C  | id est (that is)                                 | null hypothesis   | H <sub>0</sub>          |     |
|   | degrees Fahrenheit    | °F  | latitude or longitude                            | percent   | %                       |     |
|   | degrees kelvin        | K   | monetary symbols (U.S.)                          | probability   | P                       |     |
|   | hour                  | h   | months (tables and figures): first three letters | probability of a type I error (rejection of the null hypothesis when true)    | $\alpha$                |     |
|   | minute                | min                                       | registered trademark                             | probability of a type II error (acceptance of the null hypothesis when false) | $\beta$                 |     |
|   | second                | s   | trademark  | second (angular)  | "                       |     |
|   | Physics and chemistry |   | United States (adjective)                        | U.S.  | standard deviation      | SD  |
|   |                       | all atomic symbols                        |  | United States of America (noun)   | standard error          | SE  |
| alternating current                     |                       | AC  | U.S.C.   | variance  |                         |     |
| ampere                                  |                       | A   | U.S. state                                       | population sample   | Var var                 |     |
| calorie                                 |                       | cal                                       |  |   |                         |     |
| direct current                          |                       | DC  |  |   |                         |     |
| hertz                                   |                       | Hz  |  |   |                         |     |
| horsepower                              |                       | hp  |  |   |                         |     |
| hydrogen ion activity (negative log of) |                       | pH  |  |   |                         |     |
| parts per million                       |                       | ppm                                       |  |   |                         |     |
| parts per thousand                      | ppt, ‰                |   |  |   |                         |     |
| volts                                   | V                     |   |  |   |                         |     |
| watts                                   | W                     |   |  |   |                         |     |

***FISHERY MANAGEMENT REPORT NO. 16-28***

**FISHERY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR THE RECREATIONAL  
FISHERIES OF THE UPPER COPPER/UPPER SUSITNA RIVER  
MANAGEMENT AREA, 2014**

by  
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The Fishery Management Reports series was established in 1989 by the Division of Sport Fish for the publication of an overview of management activities and goals in a specific geographic area, and became a joint divisional series in 2004 with the Division of Commercial Fisheries. Fishery Management Reports are intended for fishery and other technical professionals, as well as lay persons. Fishery Management Reports are available through the Alaska State Library and on the Internet: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/publications/>. This publication has undergone regional peer review.

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## ABSTRACT

Season summaries for subsistence, sport, and personal use fisheries for 2014 and preliminary information for 2015 in the Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Management Area (UCUSMA) are presented. The UCUSMA consists of all waters and drainages of the Copper River upstream of Haley Creek and all waters and drainages of the Susitna River upstream of the Oshetna River. The area's Chinook (*Ocorhynchus tshawytscha*), sockeye (*O. nerka*), and coho salmon (*O. kisutch*) are targeted in sport, personal use, and subsistence fisheries. Other resident and anadromous fishes such as burbot (*Lota lota*), lake trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*), rainbow/steelhead trout (*O. mykiss*), Arctic grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*), and Dolly Varden (*S. malma*) are targeted in year-round sport fisheries. Whitefish are mainly targeted in subsistence fisheries. Sport fishing effort and catch in 2014 were the second lowest in the UCUSMA since 1995. Sport angler effort was estimated at 35,853 angler-days and sport catch was 67,024 fish in 2014. Estimated sport harvest totaled 23,904 fish, with sockeye salmon the primary species targeted, accounting for 75% of the harvest. Total inriver salmon counts at Miles Lake were at record high levels in 2012, 2013, and 2014 with all 3 years exceeding counts of 1.1 million fish. These large returns also influenced harvests in the Chitina Subdistrict personal use and Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence fisheries. In the Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence fishery, a total of 100,683 salmon were harvested in the combined state and federal fisheries in 2014, which is the highest harvest ever recorded in this fishery. The Chitina Subdistrict personal use fishery harvest had the second highest recorded harvest of 161,149 salmon in the combined state and federal fisheries in 2014. Sockeye salmon comprised over 98% of the subsistence and 99% of the personal use harvests. In contrast, Chinook salmon runs, harvest, and catch in the UCUSMA have declined in recent years, representing part of a statewide trend in low Chinook salmon abundance and productivity.

**Key Words:** Copper River, Susitna River, Gulkana River, Chitina Subdistrict, Glennallen Subdistrict, personal use, subsistence, Chinook salmon, sockeye salmon, burbot, lake trout, Arctic grayling, sport fish, fisheries management

## INTRODUCTION

This area management report provides information regarding the Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Management Area (UCUSMA) and is one in a series of reports annually updating fisheries management information within Region III. The report is provided for the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF), Fish and Game Advisory Committees (ACs), the general public, and other interested parties. It presents fisheries assessment information and management strategies that are developed from that information. In addition, this report includes a description of the fisheries regulatory process, geographic, administrative, and regulatory boundaries, funding sources, and other information concerning Division of Sport Fish management programs within the area.

The goals of the Division of Sport Fish (DSF) of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) are to protect and improve the state's recreational fisheries resources by managing for sustainable yield of wild stocks of sport fish, providing diverse recreational fishing opportunities, and providing information to assist the BOF in optimizing social and economic benefits from recreational fisheries. In order to implement these goals, DSF has in place a fisheries management process.

A regional review is conducted annually, during which the status of important area fisheries is considered and research needs are identified. Fisheries stock assessment projects are developed, scheduled, and implemented to meet information needs identified by fisheries managers. Projects are planned within a formal operational planning process. Biological information gathered from these research projects is combined with effort information and input from user groups to assess the need for and development of fisheries management plans, and to propose regulatory strategies.

DSF management and research activities are funded by ADF&G and Federal Aid in Fisheries Restoration funds. ADF&G funds are derived from the sale of state fishing licenses. Federal aid funds are derived from federal taxes on fishing tackle and equipment established by the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act (also referred to as the Dingell-Johnson Act or D-J Act). The D-J funds are provided to states at a match of up to 3-to-1 with the ADF&G funds. Additional funding specified for providing, protecting, and managing access to fish and game is provided through a tax on boat gas and equipment established by the Wallop-Breaux (W-B) Act. Other peripheral funding sources may include contracts with various government agencies and the private sector.

This area management report provides information regarding UCUSMA and its fisheries for 2014, with preliminary information from the 2015 season. This report is organized into 2 primary sections: a management area overview, including a description of UCUSMA and a summary of effort, harvest, and catch for the area; and a section on the significant area fisheries, including specific harvest and catch by species and drainage.

The BOF divides the state into 18 regulatory areas to organize the sport fishing regulatory system by drainage and fishery. These areas (different from regional management areas) are described in Title 5 of the Alaska Administrative Code, Chapters 47-74. The DSF of ADF&G divides the state into 3 administrative regions with boundaries roughly corresponding to groups of the BOF regulatory areas. Region I covers Southeast Alaska (the Southeast Alaska regulatory area). Region II covers portions of Southcentral and Southwest Alaska (including the Prince William Sound, Kenai Peninsula, Kenai River Drainage, Cook Inlet–Resurrection Bay Saltwater, Anchorage Bowl Drainages, Knik Arm Drainages, Susitna River Drainage, West Cook Inlet, Kodiak, Bristol Bay, and the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands regulatory areas). Region III includes Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River area and the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Region (including the North Slope, Northwestern, Yukon River, Tanana River, and Kuskokwim-Goodnews regulatory areas).

Region III is the largest geographic region, encompassing the majority of the landmass of the state of Alaska (Figure 1). The region contains over 442,500 mi<sup>2</sup> (1,146,000 km<sup>2</sup>) of land, some of the state's largest river systems (the Yukon, Kuskokwim, Colville, Noatak, Upper Copper and Upper Susitna River drainages), thousands of lakes, and thousands of miles of coastline and streams. Regional coastline boundaries extend from Cape Newenham in the southwest, around all of western, northwestern, and northern Alaska to the Canadian border on the Arctic Ocean. Region III as a whole is very sparsely populated, with the most densely populated center located in the Tanana River Valley. Fairbanks (population about 35,000, Fairbanks North Star Borough population of about 100,000) is the largest community.

For administrative purposes DSF has divided Region III into 5 fisheries management areas (Figure 1):

- 1 Northwestern/North Slope Management Area (Norton Sound, Seward Peninsula, Kotzebue Sound, and North Slope drainages);
- 2 Yukon Management Area (the Yukon River drainage except for the Tanana River drainage);
- 3 Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Management Area (the Copper River drainage upstream of Canyon Creek and Haley Creek, and the Susitna River drainage above the Oshetna River);
- 4 Tanana River Management Area (the Tanana River drainage); and

- 5 Kuskokwim Management Area (the entire Kuskokwim River drainage and Kuskokwim Bay drainages).

Area management biologists for the 5 areas are located in Nome/Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Glennallen, Fairbanks/Delta Junction, and Bethel/Fairbanks, respectively.

## **ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES**

The BOF is a 7-member board that sets fishery regulations and harvest levels, allocates fishery resources, and approves or mandates fishery conservation plans for the State of Alaska. BOF members are appointed by the governor for 3-year terms and must be confirmed by the legislature.

Under the current operating schedule, the BOF considers fishery issues for regulatory areas or groups of regulatory areas on a 3-year cycle. Proposals to create new or modify existing regulations and management plans are submitted by ADF&G and the public (any individual can submit a proposal to the BOF) for evaluation by the BOF. During its deliberations the BOF receives input and testimony through oral and written reports from ADF&G staff, members of the general public, representatives of local ACs, and special interest groups such as fishermen's associations and clubs. Members of the public provide input concerning regulation changes and allocation through submission of written proposals and testifying directly to the BOF, by participating in local AC meetings, or by becoming members of local ACs.

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

Local ACs have been established throughout the state to assist the boards of Fisheries and Game in assessing fisheries and wildlife issues, and proposed regulation changes. AC meetings allow opportunity for direct public interaction with ADF&G staff attending the meetings to answer questions and provide clarification of proposed regulatory changes regarding resource issues of local and statewide concern. The Boards Support Section within ADF&G's Division of Administrative Services provides administrative and logistical support for the BOF and ACs. During 2013, ADF&G had direct support responsibilities for 84 ACs in the state.

Within the UCUSMA there are 3 ACs: the Tok Cutoff/Nabesna Road, Copper Basin, and Paxson committees. In addition, the Copper River/Prince William Sound (Cordova), Fairbanks, Delta Junction, Mat-Su (Palmer/Wasilla), Upper Tanana-Forty Mile (Tok), and Anchorage ACs often comment on proposals concerning UCUSMA fisheries.

## **RECENT BOARD OF FISHERIES ACTIONS**

The BOF meets annually but deliberates on each individual regulatory area on a 3-year cycle, most recently for the UCUSMA in December 2014 in Cordova. At that meeting, the BOF adopted 4 of 19 proposals specific to Upper Copper River subsistence, personal use, and UCUSMA sport fisheries.

The BOF adopted a proposal amending the *Copper River King Salmon Management Plan* to provide ADF&G authority to establish a bag limit for Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) taken by fish wheel; reduce the bag limit for Chinook salmon taken by fish wheel or dip net; prohibit the retention of Chinook salmon by either fish wheel or dip net; or to modify methods and means to achieve the Chinook salmon escapement goals.

A proposal was adopted that changed the annual limit in the Chitina Subdistrict personal use dip net fishery from 15 salmon for a household of 1 and 30 salmon for a household of 2 or more to 25 salmon per permit holder and 10 additional salmon for each additional household member, of which no more than 1 may be a Chinook salmon. This action also rescinded the supplemental periods allowing the take of an additional 10 sockeye salmon (*O. nerka*) when a surplus of 50,000 or more salmon was available.

The BOF adopted 2 sport fish proposals. The first aligned rainbow (*O. mykiss*) trout regulations for Summit Lake and its outlet stream Bridge Creek. The second proposal amended the list of stocked lakes within the UCUSMA by removing Kathleen, Little Crater, Van, and Little Junction lakes

At the December 2011 meeting in Valdez, the BOF amended and adopted 1 proposal affecting the freshwater finfish (other than salmon) subsistence fishery in Lake Louise, Susitna, and Tyone lakes. The channels between Lake Louise and Susitna Lake and between Susitna Lake and Tyone Lake were closed to the taking of whitefish (*Coregonus* and *Prosopium* sp.) with gillnets.

A proposal was adopted that changed the opening date of the Chitina Subdistrict personal use dip net fishery. The fishery can open on June 7 and must open on or before June 15; previously the fishery could open on June 1 and was required to open on or before June 11. This action, in conjunction with the BOF allowing only one 12-hour fishing period within the inside closure area in the Copper River District commercial fishery during the first 2 weeks of the season, was taken to provide additional salmon to the Upper Copper River subsistence fishery. In another specific proposal affecting this subdistrict, the BOF ruled there was no new information and no errors in previous rulings in the Customary and Traditional (C&T) determination for the Chitina Subdistrict. As a result, the Chitina Subdistrict remains a personal use fishery.

The BOF adopted a proposal that amended the *Copper River King Salmon Management Plan* to include management guidance to ADF&G specific to the Chitina Subdistrict personal use and Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence fisheries. The revised plan gives ADF&G authority to restrict Chinook salmon harvest for conservation purposes.

A proposal was adopted by the BOF that prohibits the use of bait in Lake Louise, Susitna, Tyone, and Crosswind lakes from April 16–October 31. The bag and possession limit for lake trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) in these lakes was changed from 1 fish, 24 inches or greater, to 1 fish, no size limit. These actions were taken to reduce hooking mortality and maintain harvests within sustainable levels. Another proposal was amended and adopted for the rainbow trout (*O. mykiss*) fishery in Summit Lake (Tebay River drainage). The spawning closure (June 1–30) was removed and the size limit was changed from 10 fish, 12 inches or less, to 10 fish, of which only 1 may be greater than 18 inches in length.

The BOF adopted a proposal to add 1 day to the Arctic grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*) spawning closure, changing the opening from April 1–May 30 to April 1–May 31 in the *Wild Arctic Grayling Management Plan*. This aligned the dates in the plan with the dates in regulation and the intent when the plan was adopted in 2004. The BOF also adopted a proposal opening Tolsona Lake to sport fishing for burbot (*Lota lota*) with a bag and possession limit of 2 fish. Tolsona Lake had been closed to burbot fishing since 1998 and the burbot population had recovered sufficiently to allow harvest.

## **ADF&G EMERGENCY ORDER AUTHORITY**

ADF&G has emergency order (EO) authority (5 AAC 75.003) to modify time, area, and bag/possession limit regulations. EOs are implemented to address conservation issues for resident species. EOs are also implemented as a tool for inseason management of salmon fisheries. Inseason management is usually in accordance with a fisheries management plan approved by the BOF. EOs issued under this authority for the UCUSMA during 2013 and 2014 are summarized in Appendix B.

## **FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE**

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) established a priority subsistence use of fish and game for federally-qualified rural residents on lands and waters for which the federal government asserts jurisdiction. The State of Alaska has also established a priority for subsistence use of fish and game by Alaskan residents (AS 16.05.258) on all lands and waters, but cannot discriminate between rural and urban residents (Alaska State Constitution Article VIII, sections 3 and 15). Because of this difference, the federal government asserted authority to ensure a priority subsistence use of fish and game for rural residents on federal lands and certain adjacent waters. On October 1, 1999, the federal government asserted regulatory authority for assuring the rural priority for subsistence fisheries on federal public lands, which includes nonnavigable waters on public lands. Following the *State of Alaska v. Katie John* decision by the Ninth Circuit Court in 1995, the federal government expanded the definition of public land to include waters for which the federal agencies assert federal reserved water rights. Under current practice, the federal land management agencies adopt regulations to provide for the priority subsistence use by qualified rural residents in non-navigable waters within federal public lands (including Bureau of Land Management [BLM] lands) and in navigable waters adjacent to or within federal conservation system units (generally does not include BLM lands). The state retains all other fish and wildlife management authorities, including management on federal land.

Development of regulations for subsistence fisheries under the federal subsistence program occurs within the established Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) process. The public provides input concerning regulation changes by testifying in Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (RAC) meetings or by becoming council members. Ten RACs have been established throughout Alaska to assist the FSB in determining local subsistence issues and providing recommendations on proposed fishing and hunting regulations on the fish and game populations under consideration. Each RAC meets twice a year, and subsistence users and other members of the public can comment on subsistence issues at these meetings.

Within the UCUSMA, the subsistence fisheries for which the federal government asserts management responsibility include those within and adjacent to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (including the Copper River mainstem from Haley Creek upstream) and the Gulkana River National Wild River corridor. The UCUSMA fisheries fall under the purview of the Southcentral Regional Advisory Council (SCRAC). The SCRAC's most recent meeting was held in October 2014 in Kenai. At this meeting, no federal fisheries proposals for the Prince William Sound Area were addressed.

## **REGION III DIVISION OF SPORT FISH RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT STAFFING**

The Region III Division of Sport Fish staff biologists are organized into a research group and a management group. The management group consists of a management supervisor, an area biologist for each of the 5 management areas, 1 assistant area management biologists, and 1 stocked-water biologist. Area biologists evaluate fisheries and propose and implement management strategies through plans and regulation in order to meet divisional goals. A critical part of these positions is interaction with the BOF, ACs, and the general public. Stocked-waters biologists plan and implement the regional stocking program for recreational fisheries.

The research group consists of a research supervisor, a salmon research supervisor, a resident species supervisor, research biologists, and various field technicians. Research biologists plan and implement fisheries research projects in order to provide information needed by the management group to meet divisional goals. The duties of the management and research biologists augment one another.

## **STATEWIDE HARVEST SURVEY**

Sport fishing effort and harvest of sport fish species in Alaska have been estimated and reported annually since 1977 using a mail survey (e. g., Jennings et al. 2011b). The Statewide Harvest Survey (SWHS) is designed to provide estimates of effort, harvest, and catch on a site-by-site basis. It is not designed to provide estimates of effort directed towards a single species. Species-specific catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) information can seldom be derived from the report. Questionnaires are mailed to a stratified random sample of households containing at least 1 individual with a valid fishing license (resident or non-resident). Information gathered from the survey includes participation (number of anglers and days fished), number of fish caught and number harvested by species and site. These surveys estimate the number of angler-days of fishing effort expended by sport anglers fishing Alaskan waters, as well as the sport harvest (Mills 1987–1993). Beginning in 1990, the survey was modified to include estimation of catch (release plus harvest) on a site-by-site basis. Survey results for each year are available the following year; hence, the results for 2013 were available fall 2014. Additionally, creel surveys have been used to verify the mail survey for fisheries of interest, or for fisheries that require more detailed information or inseason management.

The utility of SWHS estimates depends on the number of responses received for a given site (Mills and Howe 1992; Clark 2009). In general, estimates from smaller fisheries with low participation are less precise than those of larger fisheries with high participation. Therefore, the following guidelines were implemented for evaluating survey data:

- estimates based on fewer than 12 responses should not be used other than to document that sport fishing occurred;
- estimates based on 12 to 29 responses can be useful in indicating relative orders of magnitude and for assessing long-term trends; and
- estimates based on 30 or more responses are generally representative of levels of fishing effort, catch, and harvest.

For purposes of reporting and organizing statistics in the SWHS, UCUSMA sites are designated within survey areas M (Susitna River Drainage) and I (Upper Copper River Drainage).

## **SPORT FISH GUIDE LICENSING AND LOGBOOK PROGRAM**

Since 1998, the Division of Sport Fish has operated a program to register and/or license both sport fishing guides and sport fishing guide businesses, and to collect information on sport fishing participation, effort, and harvest by saltwater and freshwater-guided clients (Sigurdsson and Powers 2009). In 1998, the BOF adopted statewide sport fishing guide regulations (5 AAC 75.075), which required all sport fishing guides and businesses to register annually with ADF&G. At this time, the BOF also adopted statewide regulations that required logbooks for saltwater charter vessels. The logbooks collected information on charter activity (location, effort, and harvest) that was necessary for the BOF for allocation and management decisions specific to Chinook salmon, rockfish (*Sebastes* spp.), and lingcod (*Ophiodon elongatus*) and for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) for allocation of Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*).

In 2004, the Alaska Legislature adopted House Bill 452 that established licensing requirements for sport fishing guide business owners and sport fishing guides on a statewide basis (effective 2005). This legislation also required logbook reporting for all freshwater guiding businesses, in addition to the existing saltwater reporting requirements. The logbook data provide location of fishing effort, level of participation, and number of species kept and released by clients. This information is used for the regulation, development, and management of fisheries and has been published annually since 2009 (data since 2006) in a Fishery Data Series report (e.g., Sigurdsson and Powers 2016).

## **SECTION I: MANAGEMENT AREA OVERVIEW**

### **MANAGEMENT AREA DESCRIPTION**

The UCUSMA consists of all waters and drainages of the Copper River upstream from a line crossing the Copper River between the south bank of the mouth of Haley Creek and the south bank of the mouth of Canyon Creek in Wood Canyon, and all waters and drainages of the Upper Susitna River upstream from the confluence of the Oshetna River (Figure 2). Located within the UCUSMA are the communities of Glennallen, Gulkana, Gakona, Chitina, McCarthy, Kenny Lake, Copper Center, Chistochina, Paxson, Mentasta, and Slana. Three of the state's major highways (Edgerton, Glenn, and Richardson), together with numerous secondary roads and trails, provide access to most of the area's sport fisheries. Float-equipped aircraft are commonly used during the summer to access the area's many remote lake and stream fisheries. Snowmachines are the popular mode of travel to remote fisheries during winter. Principal land managers in the UCUSMA are the National Park Service (Wrangell-St. Elias National Park), BLM (Gulkana Wild River), Ahtna Incorporated, Chitina Native Corporation, and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

### **FISHERY RESOURCES**

The UCUSMA offers a unique blend of freshwater fishing opportunities to sport anglers, personal use, and subsistence fishers. Three species of Pacific salmon (Chinook, coho [*O. kisutch*], and sockeye salmon) are available to anglers fishing the Upper Copper River drainage. No anadromous runs of salmon return to the Upper Susitna River drainage upstream of the Oshetna River. Although at least 1 Chinook salmon stock has been documented above Devils Canyon (located downstream of the Oshetna River and outside the UCUSMA), the canyon

presents a velocity barrier that appears to limit upstream migration of other salmon species. Waters upstream of the Oshetna River confluence are closed to salmon fishing (Figure 2).

Popular fisheries occur on the area's resident stocks of Arctic grayling, burbot, Dolly Varden (*Salvelinus malma*), rainbow and steelhead trout, and lake trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*). Smaller fisheries occur on resident stocks of whitefish.

There are a total of 24 stocked waters in the UCUSMA, which are stocked with rainbow trout, coho salmon, Arctic grayling, and Arctic char (*S. alpinus*). The stocked fish are reared at the state-owned Ruth Burnett Hatchery in Fairbanks. Stocked-lake fisheries provide additional, diversified angling opportunity and reduce harvest pressure on wild fish stocks.

A sockeye salmon hatchery operated by Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation (PWSAC) is located in the Upper Gulkana River near the community of Paxson. Egg takes are conducted near the hatchery and incubation and start-up rearing are accomplished at the hatchery. Fry are subsequently released at Crosswind, Paxson, and Summit lakes. The returning adults are harvested in commercial, subsistence, personal use, and sport fisheries.

The BOF has established 1 personal use and 2 subsistence salmon fisheries in the Upper Copper River District. The Division of Sport Fish has the lead management responsibility for these fisheries (as opposed to Division of Commercial Fisheries which manages most of the state subsistence fisheries). From 2009–2013, an average of 194,919 salmon was reported harvested annually in these fisheries (Table 1). Sockeye salmon composed about 97% of the total harvest.

Returns of salmon to the Copper River also support commercial fisheries in the Copper River District (CRD), located near the mouth of the Copper River. From 2010–2014, an average of 1,642,612 sockeye salmon and 11,788 Chinook salmon were commercially harvested in the Copper River District (Table 2).

## **ESTABLISHED MANAGEMENT PLANS AND POLICIES**

Regulations governing fisheries in the UCUSMA are found in 5 AAC 52.001 through 5 AAC 52.065 (sport fishing), in 5 AAC 77.001 through 5 AAC 77.016, 5 AAC 77.550, 5 AAC 77.570, and 5 AAC 77.591 (personal use fishing), in 5 AAC 01.001 through 5 AAC 01.040 and 5 AAC 01.600 through 5 AAC 01.647 (subsistence fishing), and in 5 AAC 24.360 (Copper River District Salmon Management Plan) and 5 AAC 24.361 (Copper River King Salmon Management Plan).

Fisheries-specific management objectives for the management area have been identified in management plans for Arctic grayling and lake trout. A series of general criteria have been prepared by DSF to guide establishment of fishery objectives, including the following:

1. **Management and protection of existing fish resources.** Divisional activities should strive to manage and protect Alaska's wild fish stock resources for future generations.
2. **Public use and benefits of existing fish resources.** Alaska's fishery resources should be made available for public use and benefit on a sustained yield basis.
3. **Rehabilitation of depressed stocks and damaged habitat.** Division activities should strive to restore and maintain fish stocks and habitat damaged by man's activities.



4. **Enhancement of natural production or creation of new opportunities.** DSF should pursue creation of new sport fishing opportunities through rehabilitation of natural stocks or creation of new fisheries where these opportunities do not negatively impact other fisheries.

Some UCUSMA fisheries have been the focus of allocative conflicts. These conflicts have led the BOF to establish several management plans and policies to guide the fisheries in the area. The goal of these plans is to allocate fish resources among users and to provide managers with guidelines to maintain a sustained yield of the fish stocks in the area. The following management plans and policies have been adopted by the BOF for UCUSMA fish stocks:

*Copper River District Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 24.360). This management plan contains spawning escapement goals for sockeye and other salmon, inriver harvest goals for the subsistence, personal use, and sport fisheries in the drainage, and hatchery brood stock and hatchery surplus goals. The goals are met through regulation of the commercial fishery near the mouth of the river, and are measured at the sonar counter at Miles Lake.

*Copper River King Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 24.361). This management plan provides for a minimum sustainable escapement goal for Chinook salmon in the Copper River drainage of 24,000 fish or greater. To ensure this goal, during statistical weeks 20 and 21 (generally, the first 2 weeks of the season) the commissioner may open no more than one 12-hour fishing period within the inside closure area of the Copper River District. ADF&G will manage the sport fishery of the Upper Copper River drainage through an annual limit for Chinook salmon of 4 fish 20 inches or greater in length. ADF&G also has the authority to further restrict the sport fishery to achieve the escapement goals using the following management measures in the following priority order: a) reduction of the annual limit; b) modification of other methods and means not specified in the plan; c) catch-and-release only designation; and, d) closure of specific waters to sport fishing for Chinook salmon.

The *Copper River Subsistence Salmon Fisheries Management Plans* (5 AAC 01.647) ensures that adequate escapement of salmon past the Miles Lake sonar in the Lower Copper River and that subsistence needs are met. It also establishes the open area, gear, season, bag and possession limits, and permit requirements for a subsistence fishery near the traditional fishing village of Batzulnetas along a portion of Tanada Creek and its confluence with the Copper River.

The *Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan* (5 AAC 77.591) establishes fishing seasons, open area, gear, bag limits, and seasonal harvest level for a personal use fishery in the Copper River. The harvest will be distributed throughout the season based on projected daily sonar counts from the Miles Lake sonar counter. Harvest will be adjusted, based on actual sonar counts, through reduction or increase of fishing times by emergency order. The permit limit may be increased during weeks of harvestable surplus determined from actual sonar counts.

The *Wild Arctic Grayling Management Plan* (5 AAC 52.055) directs ADF&G to manage wild Arctic grayling populations in the UCUSMA for long-term sustained yield through a conservative harvest regime. The plan establishes and defines 3 management approaches under which ADF&G shall manage wild Arctic grayling populations in the UCUSMA: 1) the regional management approach; 2) the conservative management approach; and, 3) the special management approach. The plan also outlines guidelines and considerations

for ADF&G, public and/or BOF to change or address the management approach for a water body or fish stock.

The *Wild Lake Trout Management Plan* (5 AAC 52.060) directs ADF&G to manage wild lake trout populations in the UCUSMA by employing a conservative harvest regime and by maintaining harvest below the maximum sustained yield level. ADF&G may take 1 or more management actions if there is a conservation or biological concern for the sustainability of the fishery or a stock harvested in that fishery. These actions include reduction of bag and possession limit, reduction of fishing time, allowing only catch-and-release, and modification of methods and means of harvest. The plan also specifies allowable measures to reduce harvest if the harvest level exceeds sustainable yield for a 2-year period. Finally, the plan establishes a process for designating special management waters and means for limiting harvest in these areas to meet the management objectives.

The *Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area Stocked Waters Management Plan* (5 AAC 52.065) directs ADF&G to manage stocked waters in the UCUSMA to provide the public diverse fishing opportunities. The plan establishes and defines 3 management approaches under which ADF&G shall manage stocked waters in the UCUSMA: 1) the regional management approach; 2) the conservative management approach; and, 3) the special management approach. Stocked waters may be reclassified through a proposal from the public, ADF&G, or BOF during the BOF's meeting cycle.

The *Cook Inlet & Copper River Basin Rainbow/Steelhead Trout Management Policy* was adopted by the BOF to provide future BOFs, fisheries managers, and the sport fishing public with: (1) management policies and implementation directives for area rainbow and steelhead trout fisheries; (2) a systematic approach to developing sport fishing regulations that includes a process for rational selection of waters for special management; and, (3) recommended research objectives. This management policy was never adopted as regulation.

## MAJOR ISSUES

The major issues associated with UCUSMA sport, personal use, and subsistence fisheries are summarized below:

*Copper River King Salmon:* From 1995–1999 commercial, subsistence, personal use, and sport harvests of Chinook salmon increased, which raised concerns regarding sustainability of the Copper River Chinook salmon stocks. From 1999–2002, Upper Copper River Chinook salmon escapement was estimated through an ADF&G radiotelemetry research study. This information, in addition to harvest and age data, resulted in a modification to the *Copper River King Salmon Management Plan* (CRKSMP) spawning escapement range of 28,000–55,000 Chinook salmon to a minimum sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 24,000 Chinook salmon. Since 2003, Chinook salmon escapement has been estimated through a fish wheel mark–recapture study conducted by the Native Village of Eyak (NVE) and LGL, Inc.

As a result of the actions taken through the CRKSMP, Chinook salmon harvests have declined in the commercial, personal use, and sport fisheries. ADF&G considers the Chinook salmon resources of the Copper River fully utilized.

More recently, Chinook salmon total runs have declined averaging an estimated 43,454 fish since 2009. From 1999–2008, the estimated Copper River Chinook salmon total run averaged 80,378 fish. The recent decline in Chinook salmon is a statewide issue, but has required restrictive inseason actions in the Copper River fisheries (sport, personal use, and commercial) to ensure that the spawning escapement goal is achieved.

*Copper River Personal Use and Subsistence Salmon Fisheries:* The Chitina Subdistrict dip net salmon fishery has been controversial since its inception in 1984. Its designation as a personal use fishery with no allocative priority has been challenged at every BOF meeting, with the BOF changing the designation to a subsistence fishery with an allocative priority in 1999 and then reversing that decision in 2003. The BOF declined to review their 2003 decision at the 2005 and 2008 meetings citing no new information to justify reconsideration. Following the 2008 meeting, the Chitina Dipnetter's Association and Alaska Fish and Wildlife Fund sued the BOF over their 2003 decision. In March 2010 the Alaska Superior Court remanded the case back to the BOF due to the 2003 BOF members' inconsistent definition of the "subsistence way of life." In March 2010 the BOF determined a definition for "subsistence way of life" and then reconsidered and upheld the negative C&T determination for the Chitina Subdistrict.

*Land Access:* Ahtna Incorporated (Ahtna; the regional Alaska Native Corporation) owns a majority of the land along the 3 rivers supporting major fisheries in the Upper Copper River drainage. Ahtna controls the uplands along the Klutina River between Klutina Lake and the Richardson Highway. The corporation owns the majority of land along the Gulkana River downstream of Sourdough and the Gulkana River National Wild River corridor. Ahtna or its shareholders also own the majority of land along the Copper River within the Glennallen Subdistrict. Ahtna initiated an access fee program for corporation uplands adjacent to the Klutina River (1998) and the Gulkana River (1999). The fee program ended years of convenient, free access to these river systems. Access fees angered many of the sport-fishing public that traditionally used corporation lands to access these rivers and resulted in some users avoiding these access points. Since that time, the access fee program has become established for all Ahtna lands and most anglers appear comfortable with paying for some access to fishing and camping areas.

Limited public access has been maintained through lands conveyed to Ahtna and other Alaska Native organizations by establishment of several public easements. The Klutina Lake Road runs parallel to the north shore of the Klutina River and is a combination of a 17b public easement (managed by the BLM), an RS 2477 (managed by the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources [DNR]), and a Department of Transportation (DOT) right of way (ROW); it provides free access to Klutina Lake and Klutina River where the river passes within the width of the RS 2477 and DOT ROW. The 17b easement provides access to the Klutina River at approximately Mile 21 of the Klutina Lake Road, downstream of the lake. On the Gulkana River, public access to the river is limited to 4 public 17b easements along the Richardson Highway: Sailors Pit at mile 130.9, Poplar Grove (mile 137), Mile 141 trail, and the Middle Fork trail at mile 169.5. There is also public access via the DOT ROW around the Richardson Highway Bridge and via the BLM Sourdough and Paxson Lake campground boat launches.

Access to the Chitina Subdistrict fishery has long been an issue between dipnetters and the 2 local Native corporations (Ahtna and Chitina Native Corporation). From the early

1990s through 2003 an access fee was associated with the State-issued dip net permit. In 2000, DOT conducted a survey of the O'Brien Creek Road from Chitina to Haley Creek and determined that the road ROW provided access to the Copper River from the road for a majority of its distance in the fishery. As a result of the survey, the Alaska Legislature removed the access fee from the permit. This action was opposed by Ahtna and Chitina Native Corporation, who remained concerned over trespass and vandalism allegedly caused by dipnetters. In July 2004, Chitina Native Corporation blocked access to the Copper River at O'Brien Creek, a primary river access point and boat launching area for charter operators and private boats, forcing these boat operators to launch approximately 3 miles upstream at the Chitina-McCarthy Bridge. This also reduced the parking and camping area used by many of the fishery participants. The state did not dispute the blocked access, as the survey indicated that this land was outside of the ROW, but has tried to negotiate access at this point with the corporations. In 2005, Chitina Native Corporation instituted a fee-based access permit where the general public can now purchase access across Corporation lands for the day or the season. However, even with the access permit, access to the river and trespass on Chitina Native Corporation lands is still a contentious issue.

*Burbot and lake trout fisheries:* The lakes of the UCUSMA have historically supported some of the largest sport fisheries for burbot and lake trout in Alaska. Stock assessment work indicated that many burbot and lake trout stocks were depressed due to overfishing in the early 1980s. Based on these and other findings, the BOF adopted management plans for burbot (1989) and lake trout (2006) stocks in UCUSMA lakes. Under these management plans, the BOF adopted more conservative regulations for UCUSMA burbot and lake trout fisheries, which have allowed some previously overfished stocks to recover enough to permit sustainable fisheries. Unattended set lines were prohibited in all UCUSMA lakes in 1991 to reduce the harvest of burbot, which also reduced the incidental harvest of lake trout. Bait restrictions have been implemented in some lakes to reduce the harvest of lake trout. These bait restrictions have adversely impacted some popular burbot fisheries. In some cases, like Lake Louise, Susitna, Tyone, Crosswind, Paxson, and Summit lakes, regulations have been adjusted for lake trout retention and allow for a limited period when bait is permitted in order to facilitate a burbot ice fishery while providing protection to the lake trout populations.

*Freshwater subsistence fisheries:* At the 2008 BOF meeting, a positive C&T determination was made for the freshwater fishes in the Prince William Sound Area, which includes the entire UCUSMA. Freshwater subsistence permits were issued in the UCUSMA since 1960, but the positive C&T determination formalized this practice. The majority of permits issued for freshwater subsistence fishing are for gillnetting whitefish between October 1 and March 31. From 1964 through 2004, the maximum number of permits issued for subsistence fishing in any year was 13. In 2009, 28 permits were issued for fishing whitefish with a gillnet. With low participation, the subsistence whitefish fishery garnered little notice from other user groups. With the increase in subsistence permits, especially on popular sport fishing lakes (generally the road accessible fisheries of Lake Louise and Paxson Lake), concern by sport anglers over potential impacts on lake trout and burbot has been elevated and may be a continuing issue into the future.

## ACCESS PROGRAMS

The Wallop-Breaux Amendment to the Sport Fish Restoration Act (Dingell-Johnson or D-J) mandates that at least 15% of the federal funds collected from taxes on boat gas and sport fishing equipment be used by the states for the development and maintenance of motorized boating access facilities. A broad range of access facilities can be approved for funding if they are constructed to achieve a state fishery management objective. These facilities can include boat ramps and lifts, docking and marina facilities, breakwaters, fish cleaning stations, rest rooms, and parking areas.

In spite of the large land base in the UCUSMA, access to sport fishing is restricted near most popular fisheries due to private land ownership. In addition, few suitable locations for boat launches exist on the major tributaries and Copper River mainstem. Various small access projects are completed each year in the UCUSMA, which have entailed validating easements, improving existing trails, and replacing or installing signs for local roadside lakes.

## INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Information regarding regulations, publications, stocking and fishing reports, news releases, and EOs for the UCUSMA can be found from the *Fishing* and *Sport* links at the ADF&G website (<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingSport.main>). In addition, many of these publications, as well as some additional publications regarding fishing opportunities in the UCUSMA, can be found at the area ADF&G office in Glennallen and the regional ADF&G office in Fairbanks. Information regarding the Gulkana Wild River (BLM) and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park (USNPS) can be obtained from the respective agency offices in Glennallen and Copper Center. Ahtna has its headquarters located in Glennallen and can be visited for information regarding access to corporation-owned lands. The Greater Copper Valley Chamber of Commerce can be a source for commercial operators located in the UCUSMA. A listing of the addresses and contact numbers for these information sources can be found in Appendix A.

There are 3 regional information and education (I&E) staff located in the Fairbanks office. An Information Officer II and a seasonal Fisheries Technician III respond to questions from the public at the office and via phone and e-mail. In addition, I&E staff distribute and update fishery brochures, fishing regulations, the regional webpage, coordinate the Fairbanks Outdoor Show booth, Kid's Fish & Game Fun Day, and the Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) program. An Education Associate II coordinates the sport fishing component of the Alaska Conservation Camp and works with schools in various communities throughout the region to provide a curriculum in sport fishing and aquatic education.

## **SPORT FISHING EFFORT, HARVEST, AND CATCH**

Effort, harvest, and catch statistics for UCUSMA sport fisheries have been estimated from response to the SWHS since 1977, and reported under the headings of the “Upper Copper River Drainage” (Area I) and the “Susitna River Drainage” (Area M); (Mills 1979-1980, 1981*a-b*, 1982–1994, Howe et al. 1995–1996, 2001*a-d*, Walker et al. 2003, Jennings et al. 2004, 2006*a-b*, 2007, 2009*a-b*, 2010*a-b*, 2011*a-b*, 2015; Romberg et al. *In prep*). Anglers expended a total of 35,853 angler-days of effort in UCUSMA drainages in 2014, which is 3,751 angler-days less than 2013 (Table 3) and the second-lowest angler activity since 1977 when sport fishing effort was first estimated (Somerville 2008). Angler effort in the UCUSMA has generally remained between 40,000 and 60,000 angler-days, with the exception of the period from 1992 through 1995 when angler effort averaged nearly 85,000 angler-days and peaked at 102,951 angler-days in 1995 (Somerville 2008). The majority of effort in the UCUSMA occurs in the Gulkana and Klutina river drainages, representing approximately 67% of the total area effort in the past decade (Table 3).

Sockeye salmon is the predominant species harvested in the UCUSMA, representing 62% (17,200 fish average) of all species harvested from 2009–2013 and 75% (18,005 fish) in 2014 (Table 4). The next most harvested species from 2009–2013 were Arctic grayling (3,750 fish) and burbot (1,795 fish), followed by Chinook salmon, lake trout, stocked rainbow trout, Dolly Varden, and whitefish.

Arctic grayling are the predominant species caught in the UCUSMA, representing 45% (42,298 fish) of all species caught from 2009–2013 and 39% (26,163 fish) in 2014 (Table 5). The next most caught species from 2009–2013 were sockeye salmon (23,546 fish) and lake trout (8,641 fish), followed by Chinook salmon, wild rainbow trout, stocked rainbow trout, burbot, Dolly Varden, and whitefish.

## **SECTION II: FISHERIES**

This section provides a summary of sport fisheries by species that were considered significant in the UCUSMA in 2014 and 2015. Discussion of each fishery will address: 1) historical perspective; 2) recent fishery performance (stock status); 3) fishery objectives and management; 4) current issues; 5) recent actions by the BOF; and 6) ongoing and recommended management and research activities. Recent fishery performance will focus on data from 2014; however, observations or research data regarding these fisheries in 2015 will be presented when available. A summary of the historical (prior to 1993) sport fishing effort and harvest in the UCUSMA can be found in Somerville (2008).

### **CHINOOK SALMON SPORT FISHERIES**

#### **Background and Historic Perspective**

The Copper River drainage supports the only anadromous runs of Chinook salmon in the UCUSMA. No anadromous runs of Chinook salmon return to the Upper Susitna River drainage upstream of the Oshetna River.

Chinook salmon returning to the Copper River drainage pass through the Copper River Delta and enter the Copper River in early May. The peak timing in the Lower Copper River is from mid-May to mid-June, with the return essentially complete by July 1. However, small numbers of Chinook salmon continue to enter the Copper River through August. Chinook salmon make their

way to spawning areas in the Upper Copper River tributaries through June and July and spawn mid-July through August. There are no known Chinook salmon spawning streams downstream of Haley Creek.

Chinook salmon are found in at least 40 tributaries distributed throughout the Copper River Basin. Aerial escapement surveys have been conducted in 35 of these systems, with 9 of these systems (Little Tonsina River, Greyling Creek, Mendeltna Creek, Kaina Creek, Indian River, Gulkana River, East Fork Chistochina River, and Manker and St. Anne creeks) surveyed consistently from 1966 (Roberson and Whitmore 1991) through 2004. However, aerial index counts have proven to be an unreliable index of overall Chinook salmon escapement in the Copper River drainage. There was a high variability in the proportion of total escapement between years, and the majority of the index streams disproportionately represented early run stocks.

A radiotelemetry study conducted by ADF&G from 2002–2004 indicated only 45% of the Chinook salmon returns to the Klutina River and 16% to the Tonsina River spawned in the index streams. The remainder spawned in the glacial mainstem of those rivers (Savereide 2005a). The study also indicated that the 9 index streams represented only 26–46% of total escapement in the Copper River drainage. Therefore, annual aerial index counts were reduced and have continued on only 4 index streams: Gulkana River, East Fork Chistochina River, and Manker and St. Anne creeks in the Klutina River drainage. These 4 streams provide comparable indices of escapement in these systems from year to year.

The *Copper River King Salmon Management Plan* was adopted by the BOF in 1996 and is the primary guide to management of Chinook salmon stocks in the Copper River drainage. Copper River Chinook salmon stocks are harvested in commercial and subsistence gillnet fisheries in the Copper River District near the mouth of the river, a personal use dip net fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict near Chitina, a subsistence dip net and fish wheel fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict between the Chitina and Slana rivers, and sport fisheries in various tributaries. Because most of these fisheries are comprised of mixed stocks, the contribution to the harvest by each spawning stock could not be quantified, and Chinook salmon productivity could not be assessed using stock specific spawner-recruit relationships (Brady et al. 1991; Roberson and Whitmore 1991). From 1969–1981 the commercial harvest of Chinook salmon averaged 19,961 fish (Pirtle 1980; Randall et al. 1981). In 1982, commercial harvest spiked to over 47,000 Chinook salmon and to over 52,000 Chinook salmon in 1983; after which, the overall return and harvest of Chinook salmon declined through 1990, with a commercial harvest of 21,702 Chinook salmon that year (Hollowell et al. 2007). Chinook salmon harvests remained relatively stable during 1977–1990 in the subsistence and sport fisheries in the Upper Copper River, while harvest in the Chitina Subdistrict personal use salmon fishery increased with increased participation (Somerville 2008). Harvest in all Chinook salmon fisheries entered an increasing trend beginning in 1991 (Table 6) that peaked in 1998 with an overall harvest of 87,343 Chinook salmon in the Copper River fisheries.

From 1999 to 2007 total Chinook salmon harvest ranged from 41,423–79,794 fish (Table 6). During 2009–2013 the total Chinook salmon harvest averaged 17,575 fish. The total Chinook salmon harvest in 2013 was 13,868 fish, which is the second lowest since 1974 (Evenson and Savereide 1999). Chinook salmon escapement has averaged 29,666 fish from 2000 through 2013 and met or exceeded the sustainable escapement goal (SEG) for the Copper River in 9 of those 13 years. Chinook salmon escapement was below the SEG in 2014 and was estimated at 20,709

fish. Since 2009, implementation of inseason management restrictions in all fisheries except subsistence, as provided in the *Copper River King Salmon Management Plan*, have resulted in reduced harvests and achievement of the SEG in all but 2 years (2010 and 2014).

Chinook salmon sport fisheries occur in various tributaries of the Copper River. Fisheries on the Gulkana and Klutina rivers account for 93% of the sport caught Chinook salmon in the UCUSMA (Table 7). In 1994 an annual bag limit of 5 Chinook salmon was established for the Upper Copper River drainage in an attempt to stem rising Chinook salmon harvests. Sport harvest of Chinook salmon continued to increase through 1996, when it peaked at 9,116 fish and has declined since (Table 7). In 1997, guides were prohibited to operate on Tuesdays during the Chinook salmon season, but this appeared to have little or no effect on guided harvests. In 2000, the annual limit for Chinook salmon in the Upper Copper River drainage was reduced from 5 to 4 and the guide restriction was repealed. From 2009–2013 sport harvest of Chinook salmon in the UCUSMA averaged 1,269 fish and totaled 931 fish in 2014 (Table 7), the third lowest sport harvest since 1977 (Somerville 2008). Inseason management actions have restricted the sport harvest of Chinook salmon in the Upper Copper River drainage each year since 2009.

Creel survey data indicate that guided Chinook salmon anglers are more successful than unguided anglers on the Gulkana and Klutina rivers (LaFlamme 1997; Potterville and Webster 1990; Schwanke 2009a). Harvest estimates from guide logbooks also indicate a majority of Chinook salmon are harvested by guided anglers (Table 8). Since 2005, ADF&G has required guides to log the harvest and number of fish released per client by trip and fishing site (Sigurdsson and Powers 2009-2014, 2016). The number of guides operating on area rivers increased from the early 1980s. For example, prior to the 1986 season, only 1 individual specialized in guiding anglers for Chinook salmon on the Gulkana River. By 1989, 5 guides were operating on the Gulkana River (Potterville and Webster 1990) and from 2007 through 2014, 8–29 guides operated annually on the Gulkana River (H. Sigurdsson, Sport Fish Biologist, ADF&G, Anchorage, personal communication; Table 8). On the Klutina River, 18–28 guides have operated there annually from 2005 when logbooks became required through 2013. In 2014, a total of 10 guides operated on the Gulkana River and 13 on the Klutina River (Table 8).

To more accurately assess Chinook salmon abundance in the Copper River, research was initiated in 1995 to estimate the timing and contribution of Chinook salmon stocks from its major tributaries. In 1996, a weir was operated on the Gulkana River to enumerate Chinook salmon in tandem with a creel survey to estimate Chinook salmon harvest (LaFlamme 1997). From 1997 to 1999, a coded-wire tagging study was conducted in the Gulkana, Klutina, Tonsina, and East Fork Chistochina rivers. Unfortunately, marking wild Chinook salmon fry with coded wire tags proved an ineffective method to assess returns due to a low tag recovery rate (Sarafin 2000; Brase and Sarafin 2004).

From 1999–2004, radiotelemetry studies were used to determine Chinook salmon distribution and timing of entry into the spawning streams of the Copper River (Evenson and Wuttig 2000; Wuttig and Evenson 2001; Savereide and Evenson 2002; Savereide 2003, 2004, 2005a). Estimates of total escapement were obtained during these studies from a mark–recapture experiment in which Chinook salmon were captured and tagged during the radio-transmitter deployment and then recaptured in the Chitina Subdistrict personal use fishery. In 2002, a separate mark–recapture study was initiated using only fish wheels as the means to capture (for marking) and recapture marked and unmarked Chinook salmon. This continuing study, conducted by the Native Village of Eyak and LGL, Inc., has provided a postseason estimate of



annual Chinook salmon escapement to the Copper River since 2003 (Smith et al. 2003; Smith 2004; Smith and van den Broek 2005*a-b*; van den Broek et al. 2008, 2009*a-b*, 2011, *In prep*).

## **Gulkana River Chinook Salmon Sport Fishery**

### ***Background and Historic Perspective***

The Gulkana River drainage originates in the Alaska Range and flows south to join the Copper River near the community of Gulkana. The section of the Gulkana River upstream from Sourdough has been designated as “wild” under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. Access to the river, downstream of Paxson Lake, is limited to 7 state and federal trail and site easements and 1 privately owned and controlled site accessible from the Richardson Highway, which parallels much of the river. Anglers use rafts, canoes, and powerboats to gain access to the more remote sections of the river. Raft and canoe anglers frequent the various sections of the river from Paxson Lake downstream to the Richardson Highway Bridge. Powerboat operators generally launch at the BLM Sourdough launch and use the river from approximately 2 miles below Sourdough upstream to several miles above the confluence of the West Fork. Powerboat operators also launch from the Richardson Highway Bridge and fish the 5-mile reach of the river above the bridge. Powerboat operators access the mouth of the Gulkana River, when the river level is sufficiently high, by launching near the Richardson Highway Bridge and boating down the Gulkana River, and when water levels are lower by launching in the Gakona River, to the north, and then boating down the Copper River.

The Gulkana River drainage has historically supported the largest sport fishery for harvest (Table 7) and catch (Table 9) of Chinook salmon in the UCUSMA. Chinook salmon begin entering the Gulkana River in early- to mid-June. The sport fishery peaks during late June/early July, but fishing for Chinook salmon continues until the season closes July 20th. Spawning begins in mid-July and continues through late August. Most spawning occurs upstream of the confluence of the West Fork (Figure 3).

Spawning escapement of Chinook salmon in the Gulkana River, upstream of the West Fork, has been documented since 1966 by aerial index counts (Brady et al. 1991; Roberson and Whitmore 1991; Taube 2006*a-b*). A weir was operated on the Gulkana River in 1996 to provide a count of Chinook salmon escapement concurrent with a creel survey conducted that same year (LaFlamme 1997). The estimated total inriver run in 1996 was 13,840 and estimated spawning escapement was 11,684.

In 2002, ADF&G initiated a multi-year project with BLM to estimate the escapement of Chinook salmon in the Gulkana River (Taras and Sarafin 2005; Perry-Plake et al. 2007; Perry-Plake and Antonovich 2009; Perry-Plake and Huang 2011; Savereide 2010, 2011; Maclean 2013). A counting tower site was established approximately 2 miles upstream of the West Fork confluence to enumerate Chinook salmon migrating upstream. The estimated escapement passing the counting tower has generally decreased each year since 2002 and has ranged from 6,390 in 2002 to 1,730 in 2012. The final estimated Chinook salmon escapement in 2015 was 3,738 fish (Schwanke 2016, *In prep*). From 2002–2004 a radiotelemetry tracking station was installed at the tower site to collect data in conjunction with the Copper River Chinook salmon radiotelemetry project. These data enabled the estimation of the proportion of radiotagged Chinook salmon that entered the Gulkana River and migrated past the tower. The telemetry data indicated that 50–86% of the Gulkana River Chinook salmon return past the counting tower during these years (Taras and Sarafin 2005; Perry-Plake et al. 2007). A radiotelemetry project tracking Chinook salmon distribution and spawning in

the Gulkana River was initiated in 2013 and ran through 2015 (Schwanke 2016). Telemetry data from this project indicated that no more than 50% of the Gulkana River Chinook salmon spawned above the counting tower during these years. The cause of this apparent shift in spawning locations is not clearly identified and could be the result of low water conditions in 2013–2015. A longer-term trend due to unidentified environmental factors or may be a result of differences in capture method and tag deployment between the 2 studies.

A roving creel survey conducted in 1989 (Potterville and Webster 1990) and an on-site survey conducted in 1996 (LaFlamme 1997) showed the majority of effort and harvest of Chinook salmon from the Gulkana River occurred from the Richardson Highway Bridge upstream to the confluence of the West Fork. During both creel surveys, few anglers appeared to fish the single-hook, artificial fly only area downstream of the Richardson Highway Bridge. Although many anglers floated the upper river, the harvest of Chinook salmon appeared minimal in this reach because most Chinook salmon did not arrive to the area until after the July 19 spawning season closure. Anglers that were guided or used bait had higher harvest and catch rates. Shore anglers caught as many Chinook salmon as boat anglers but harvested more and expended more time to catch a Chinook salmon. According to both creel surveys, approximately 50% of the harvest occurred on weekends.

Regulations used to manage the Gulkana River Chinook salmon fisheries accommodate concurrent fisheries on other species, provide protection to these other species populations, and provide protection for spawning Chinook salmon while still providing maximum opportunity for the anglers who target Chinook salmon. Twelvemile Creek, the Middle Fork drainage, and all waters of the Gulkana River drainage upstream of the Middle Fork confluence are closed to fishing for Chinook salmon year-round to protect spawning fish (Figure 3). The remainder of the river is open to Chinook salmon fishing from January 1 through July 19. From June 1 through July 19 anglers may use bait, artificial lures, and treble hooks upstream from the Richardson Highway Bridge to an ADF&G marker located 7.5 miles upstream of the West Fork confluence. From June 1 through July 31, anglers are limited to using only single-hook, artificial flies from the Richardson Highway Bridge downstream to an ADF&G marker approximately 500 yards downstream of the confluence with the Copper River. In all waters of the Gulkana River drainage, upstream of a marker 7.5 miles upstream of the West Fork confluence with the mainstem, and in the entire Gulkana River drainage from July 20 to May 31, only unbaited, single-hook artificial lures may be used. This restriction is intended to protect the resident rainbow trout population and the small population of steelhead trout that return to the Gulkana River.

### ***Recent Fishery Performance***

The sport harvest of Chinook salmon in the Gulkana River averaged 545 fish over the last 5 years (2009–2013) and 1,493 fish from 2004–2013 (Table 7). Angler effort on the Gulkana River, which is presumed to be primarily focused toward Chinook salmon, peaked in the 1990s, reaching 44,075 angler-days in 1995 (Table 3). The 5-year average (2009–2013) of angler effort was 12,013 angler-days. Angler effort in 2014 was the second lowest ever recorded for the Gulkana River at 8,475 angler-days and most likely reflects inseason restrictions of the Chinook salmon fishery (Appendix B).

On June 14, 2014, the annual limit for Chinook salmon 20 inches or more in length was reduced from 4 to 1 fish. No other restrictions were imposed on the Upper Copper River Chinook salmon

fisheries in 2014. The 2014 harvest of 447 Chinook salmon from the Gulkana River reflects the reduced annual limit and was the second lowest harvest recorded for this fishery (Table 7). The final escapement estimate for Chinook salmon in the Gulkana River for 2014 was 3,478 fish (Schwanke *In prep*).

For the first time since 2009, no management actions were taken in the Upper Copper River Chinook salmon sport fishery during 2015. The final escapement estimate for Chinook salmon in the Gulkana River for 2015 was 3,738 fish (Schwanke *In prep*), which is just below the overall project average of 3,816 fish (2002–2014).

### ***Fishery Objectives and Management***

The goal of past and current management of Chinook salmon on the Gulkana River has been to ensure sustained yield, but there is currently no escapement goal specific to the Gulkana River. The *Copper River King Salmon Fishery Management Plan* was developed in 1996 to provide for Chinook salmon escapement at or above average historic levels. To meet this goal, escapement objectives (postseason indices of escapement only) were developed for several river systems based on the 1977–1995 average aerial index count for those systems. Only years in which the systems were surveyed between July 17 and 31 were used in the average as this was considered the peak spawning period. An aerial escapement index objective of 1,200 Chinook salmon has been used for the Gulkana River. An inseason escapement count target of 4,070 Chinook salmon past the Gulkana River counting tower was developed using an expansion of the aerial survey indices from 2002–2011 to the tower counts for those years (Maclean 2013). This target is not a formal escapement goal, but rather a target to help guide inseason management decisions, which depend on voluntary reports from sport anglers and guides, Copper River subsistence and personal use fishers, aerial index counts, and counting tower reports.

### ***Current Issues and Fishery Outlook***

Increased use by floaters and powerboat operators on the Gulkana River in the late 1990s intensified conflicts between these user groups and instigated health concerns by local residents who use the Gulkana River as a source of drinking water. There are currently no restrictions on the number of rafts or power boats used for general recreation, fishing, or transporting anglers on the Gulkana River. At the 1999, 2003, and 2008 BOF meetings, proposals were submitted to limit motor boat use on the Gulkana River. None of these proposals was addressed, as they fell outside the purview of the BOF. However, BLM has authority within the designated wild section of the river to establish a permit system for camping on their lands and thus limit the number of trips per year or number of people per trip. No such permit system has been implemented, but BLM currently issues portable toilets for rafting groups floating the river from Paxson Lake to the Sourdough boat launch. Overall use of the Gulkana River has declined with declines in the Chinook salmon returns to that river. As the Gulkana River Chinook salmon stocks recover to the levels observed in the 1990s, increased angler and recreational effort on the river may lead to renewed conflicts.

Public access to the Gulkana River is limited to a few easements and access points, and this lack of access drives the need for people to float long sections of the river or use a power boat to access quality fishing locations. A combination of private and federal campgrounds and a developed public use area on DOT land immediately below the Richardson Highway Bridge provide overnight sites for river users.

Recent trends in total returns of Chinook salmon to the Copper River and other state waters indicate the Gulkana River will likely experience low returns into at least the near future. Harvest and catch data, as well as tower counts, indicate a continuing trend in run strength for Gulkana River Chinook salmon stocks beginning in the late 1990s. Despite these declines, the Gulkana River is expected to remain a popular Chinook salmon fishery. It is anticipated that management actions in low run years will continue to be needed to achieve adequate Chinook salmon escapements, thereby providing sustainable fisheries into the future.

### ***Recent Board of Fisheries Actions***

There were 3 proposals before the BOF for considerations at the December 2014 meeting in Cordova that would have affected the Gulkana River Chinook salmon sport fishery. All 3 sought restrictions for barbless hooks: one limiting all Chinook salmon fisheries in the UCUSMA to unbaited, single-hook, barbless hooks; one limiting Chinook salmon anglers to a single barbless hook after achieving the daily or annual bag limit; and, one limiting fisheries, restricted to catch and release, to single, barbless hooks. All 3 proposals failed.

There were no proposals carried by the BOF at the 2011 meeting in Valdez that affected the Gulkana River Chinook salmon fishery.

### ***Current or Recommended Research and Management Activities***

A goal of the Gulkana River counting tower project is to provide data to potentially develop a spawning escapement goal (SEG) for this river. The counting tower has already proven to be effective for inseason management and should be maintained as a future management tool. A 3-year radiotelemetry study on Chinook salmon movements and spawning locations within the Gulkana River drainage was begun in 2013. This study ended in 2015 and indicated that 50% of Chinook salmon spawning occurred below the Gulkana River counting tower in 2013–2015.

## **Klutina River Chinook Salmon Sport Fishery**

### ***Background and Historical Perspective***

The semi-glacial Klutina River drops rapidly out of Klutina Lake and enters the Copper River at the community of Copper Center. Access to the river is available from the old and new Richardson Highways and along the Klutina Lake Road (also called the Brenwick-Craig Road), which parallels the river. Shore anglers participate in the fishery adjacent to the Richardson Highway and the Klutina Lake Road. Jet-powered riverboats are used by experienced operators to access the upstream portions of the river. The river has considerable stretches of whitewater and is considered to be very challenging to navigate. Jet boats are launched from private land adjacent to the highway or from a boat launch within the highway ROW along the new Richardson Highway Bridge. Rafters also use the Klutina River and launch from sites located at mile 4, mile 14, and mile 22 of the Klutina Lake Road and exit the river at the new Richardson Highway Bridge. The fast water of the Klutina River limits the number of resting pools for Chinook salmon to less than 2 dozen good fishing sites accessible to most anglers in the lower portion of the river.

The Klutina River supports the second largest sport fishery for Chinook salmon in the UCUSMA. Chinook salmon begin entering the Klutina River in late June, with the run continuing into August. The Chinook salmon sport fishery opens on July 1, peaks during the third week of July, and continues until the season closes on August 11. Chinook salmon spawn

from late July through August in tributary streams of the river and lake and in the mainstem of the river. Most spawning is believed to occur upstream of a point adjacent to mile 19.2 on the Klutina Lake Road. Current open seasons for Chinook salmon and areas closed to sport fishing for Chinook salmon on the Klutina River provide protection to Chinook salmon spawners. On the Klutina River from an ADF&G marker located adjacent to mile 19.2 of the Klutina Lake Road upstream to Klutina Lake, Chinook salmon may be taken only from July 1 through July 19. From mile 19.2 downstream to an ADF&G marker at mile 13.0 of the Klutina Lake Road, Chinook salmon may be taken from July 1 through July 31. From mile 13.0 downstream to the confluence of the Copper River, Chinook salmon may be taken from July 1 through August 10. The current bag and possession limit for sport caught Chinook salmon greater than or equal to 20 inches is 1 fish. The Upper Copper River drainage wide annual bag limit of 4 Chinook salmon greater than or equal to 20 inches per year includes the Klutina River.

Creel surveys were conducted on the Klutina River in 1988 (Roth and Delaney 1989), in 1989 (Potterville and Webster 1990), and 2006 (Schwanke 2009a). All 3 surveys indicated that most Chinook salmon are harvested by anglers accessing the river by boat (80% in 1988, 88% in 1989, and 87% in 2006). The 2006 survey segregated the boat accessed Chinook salmon harvest by anglers accessing with power boats (70%) and rafts (17%) (Schwanke 2009a). Furthermore, anglers accessing the fishery via boats operated by commercial guide services were more successful. Nearly 80% of the harvest of Chinook salmon and 90% of the Chinook salmon catch was attributed to guided boat anglers in 1988 (Roth and Delaney 1989). The 1989 creel survey reported that the vast majority of boat anglers that participated in the fishery were guided (Potterville and Webster 1990). In 2006, guided anglers accounted for 90% of the Chinook salmon harvest in June and 79% of the harvest in July (Schwanke 2009a).

Aerial index counts have been conducted on 2 clearwater tributaries (Manker and St. Anne creeks) of the Klutina River since 1966 (Brady et al. 1991; Roberson and Whitmore 1991; Taube 2006a-b). Radiotelemetry studies conducted on Chinook salmon from 1999–2004 indicated that these 2 streams accounted for about 45% of the spawning population of the Klutina River system (Evenson and Wuttig 2000; Wuttig and Evenson 2001; Savereide and Evenson 2002; Savereide 2003, 2004, 2005a). Additionally, the Chinook salmon returning to Manker and St. Anne creeks primarily represented the early component of the Klutina River Chinook salmon run. The majority of Klutina River Chinook salmon spawn in the mainstem and generally later than those in the clearwater tributaries of the river.

### ***Recent Fishery Performance***

The harvest of Chinook salmon from the Klutina River ranged from 1,136 to 1,873 fish from 2000–2008. From 2009–2014, management actions were taken to ensure adequate spawning escapement in light of weak Chinook salmon returns (Appendix B; Somerville 2011, 2013). These management actions led to Chinook salmon harvests in 2009 (733 fish), 2010 (863 fish), 2011 (1,043 fish), 2012 (314 fish), and 2013 (223) that were the lowest since 1990 (Table 7; Somerville 2008).

In 2014, the annual limit for Chinook salmon 20 inches or more in length was reduced from 4 to 1 fish, effective June 14. No further management actions were taken affecting Chinook salmon fisheries in the UCUSMA that year. The 2014 harvest of 414 Chinook salmon was below the 2009–2013 average harvest of 635 Chinook salmon and the third lowest harvest ever reported for the Klutina River fishery.

No management actions were taken during 2015 in the Upper Copper River Chinook salmon fisheries.

### ***Fishery Objectives and Management***

Although no specific fishery objectives have been established for this stock, the underlying goal of fisheries management is to ensure sustained yield. Aerial index counts of the clearwater tributaries will continue to be used to monitor Klutina River Chinook salmon returns inseason, along with anecdotal reports from the subsistence, personal use, and sport fisheries; catch data from the Copper River commercial gillnet fishery; and NVE/LGL project fish wheels.

The Klutina River Chinook salmon return is managed as a single stock. Anglers and guides consider the return to be 2 separate stocks of Chinook salmon, composed of an early and late run. Radiotelemetry data indicate that early returning fish primarily spawn in Manker and St. Anne creeks, and the later returning Chinook salmon primarily spawn in the mainstem Klutina River (Evenson and Wuttig 2000; Wuttig and Evenson 2001; Savereide and Evenson 2002; Savereide 2003, 2004, 2005a). However, early and late returning Chinook salmon do spawn in both locations and there is sufficient overlap in entry timing of both tributary and mainstem spawners that no distinct temporal differences between early and late returning Chinook salmon have been identified. Genetic sampling conducted from 2003–2005 had insufficient resolution to determine a significant genetic difference between the tributary and mainstem spawners (Seeb et al. 2009).

### ***Current Issues and Fishery Outlook***

Radiotelemetry indicated that 10–12% of the total Copper River drainage Chinook salmon escapement from 2002–2004 spawned in the Klutina River, compared to the 17–27% that spawned in the Gulkana River during the same period (Savereide 2005a). Since 1995 the Chinook salmon sport harvest from the Klutina River has composed 30–40% of the overall Upper Copper River drainage sport harvest. Although harvest levels rose during 2000–2003, they have since declined in conjunction with the drainage wide decline in Chinook salmon runs in recent years (Table 7). Continued low Chinook salmon runs may make future restrictions to the fishery necessary.

The majority of the land adjacent to the Klutina River upstream of the Richardson Highway is owned by Ahtna Native Corporation. Ahtna allows access across its lands along the Klutina Lake Road with the purchase of access passes. If fees increase without increased access this may result in conflicts between fishery users and the corporation or increased congestion in areas of the Klutina River that are not corporation lands.

### ***Recent Board of Fisheries Actions***

There were 3 proposals before the BOF for considerations at the December 2014 meeting in Cordova that would have affected the Gulkana River Chinook salmon sport fishery. All 3 sought restrictions for barbless hooks: one limiting all Chinook salmon fisheries in the UCUSMA to unbaited, single-hook, barbless hooks; one limiting Chinook salmon anglers to a single barbless hook after achieving the daily or annual bag limit; and one limiting fisheries, restricted to catch and release, to single, barbless hooks. All 3 proposals failed.

There were no proposals carried by the BOF at the 2011 meeting in Valdez that affected the Gulkana River Chinook salmon fishery.

### ***Current or Recommended Research and Management Activities***

Aerial index counts should continue to provide an inseason assessment of the Chinook salmon return in the Klutina River. Management of Chinook salmon in the Klutina River would benefit from another radiotelemetry project, which could provide data on Chinook salmon movements and milling behavior within the Klutina River to ensure current closing dates on the upper river sections are providing the assumed protection to spawning adults. Continued genetic sampling may provide data to determine if the tributary and mainstem spawning groups are distinct stocks or a single related stock. Finally, continuation of the NVE/LGL Chinook salmon stock assessment provides the best inriver abundance estimate of Chinook salmon for the Copper River and is essential to the management of Chinook salmon sport fisheries.

Management of the Klutina River Chinook salmon stock would benefit from a system to count or estimate the Chinook salmon run to the Klutina River drainage. However, current technology does not appear able to provide reliable and accurate species apportionment between sockeye salmon and Chinook salmon, whose run timings overlap.

### **Other Copper River Basin Chinook Salmon Sport Fisheries**

#### ***Background and Historical Perspective***

Less than 10% of the harvest of Chinook salmon in the UCUSMA occurs in systems other than the Gulkana and Klutina rivers. The majority of this remaining harvest occurs in the Tonsina River. The semi-glacial Tonsina River flows from Tonsina Lake into the Copper River downstream of the Klutina River confluence (Figure 2). The Tonsina River is crossed by the Richardson Highway, Edgerton Highway, and Alyeska Pipeline bridges. Shore anglers participate in the fishery adjacent to the Edgerton and Richardson highways, some angling is conducted by raft between the Richardson and Edgerton highways, and some angling is conducted by fly-in anglers fishing the Tonsina Lake outlet. Some boat anglers access the Tonsina River to fish the mouth by boating upstream from the Chitina–McCarthy Bridge.

Chinook salmon return to the Tonsina River drainage from late-June through early-August, similar to Chinook salmon in the Klutina River. Spawning occurs in tributaries and mainstem of the Tonsina River from mid-July through August.

In 2014, the annual limit for Chinook salmon 20 inches or more in length was reduced from 4 to 1 fish, effective June 14. No further management actions were taken affecting Chinook salmon fisheries in the UCUSMA that year. No management actions were taken during 2015 in the Upper Copper River Chinook salmon fisheries.

No Chinook salmon harvests from the Tonsina River were reported through the SWHS from 2010–2012 (Table 7). However, angler effort, directed at Chinook salmon, has been observed every year in several locations along the river. A total of 51 Chinook salmon were harvested from the Tonsina River in 2013 and 16 Chinook salmon were harvested in 2014. The sport harvest of Chinook salmon in the Tonsina River has averaged 22 fish over the last 5 years (2009–2013) and 54 fish over the last 10 years (2004–2013).

From 1999 to 2004, a radiotelemetry study of Chinook salmon in the Copper River drainage provided annual estimates of total upriver escapement, as well as migratory timing through the Chitina Subdistrict personal use fishery, timing into the spawning tributaries, and distribution and proportion of Chinook salmon in spawning tributaries (Evenson and Wuttig 2000; Wuttig

and Evenson 2001; Savereide and Evenson 2002; Savereide 2003, 2004, 2005a). From 2002–2004, the Tonsina River Chinook salmon run represented approximately 12% of the total Copper River return, a similar percentage as the run in the Klutina River.

Chinook salmon spawning escapement to the Tonsina River was documented by aerial index counts of the Little Tonsina River and Greyling Creek from 1966–2004 (Brady et al. 1991; Roberson and Whitmore 1991; Taube 2006b). The spawning escapement to these index sites averaged 465 fish from 1977–1986, but the average index count declined to 310 for 1996–2004. Aerial index counts on the Tonsina River tributaries were discontinued after 2004 due to minimal sport fishing effort and harvest, and based upon the radiotelemetry study that indicated the majority of spawning occurred in the glacially-occluded mainstem.

Current regulations allow sport fishing for Chinook salmon in the Tonsina River from July 1 through July 19 above the downstream edge of the Alyeska Pipeline access bridge and from July 1 through August 10 downstream of the access bridge. The July 20 closure date for the upper river provides protection for spawning Chinook salmon. Tonsina Lake and all tributaries to the Tonsina River are closed to Chinook salmon fishing. The current bag and possession limit for Chinook salmon greater than or equal to 20 inches in this drainage is 1 fish, with an annual bag limit of 4 Chinook salmon greater than or equal to 20 inches for the Copper River drainage.

A limited fishery for Chinook salmon also occurs in the Tazlina River drainage. Traditionally, most effort was focused at the mouth of Kaina Creek, which flows into Tazlina Lake. Effort dramatically dropped after 1999 and has averaged 878 angler-days for 2004–2013 (Table 3). No Chinook salmon harvest has been reported from the Tazlina River drainage since 1998 (Table 7), but catch was reported in 1999, 2007, 2008, 2010, and 2011 and has averaged 6 Chinook salmon from 2009–2013 (Table 9). The average escapement index for the Tazlina drainage was 576 Chinook salmon from 1977–2004 (65% from Kaina Creek, 35% from Mendeltna Creek). Aerial index counts on Kaina and Mendeltna creeks were discontinued after 2004 due to minimal sport fishing effort and harvest and based upon radiotelemetry studies (Evenson and Wuttig 2000; Wuttig and Evenson 2001; Savereide and Evenson 2002; Savereide 2003–2005a) that indicated the Tazlina River represented less than 5% of the total Copper River return of Chinook salmon.

### ***Fishery Objectives and Management***

No specific fishery objectives have been established for the Tonsina or Tazlina river Chinook salmon stocks. The underlying goal of past and current management is to ensure sustained yield. The aerial index count had been used as a postseason escapement index, but had limited utility to describe overall escapement in these systems.

### ***Current Issues and Fishery Outlook***

The overall strong runs of Chinook salmon in the 1990s and good runs through 2007 along with implementation of the *Copper River Chinook Salmon Management Plan* have thus far help prevent the overexploitation of Copper River Chinook salmon stocks. However, if the Copper River experiences below average Chinook salmon runs as seen in recent years, managers may need to continue to take inseason restrictions to ensure continued sustainability of the Copper River Chinook salmon stocks.

### ***Recent Board of Fisheries Actions***

There were 3 proposals before the BOF for considerations at the December 2014 meeting in Cordova that would have affected the UCUSMA Chinook salmon sport fisheries. All 3 sought



restrictions for barbless hooks: one limiting all Chinook salmon fisheries in the UCUSMA to unbaited, single-hook, barbless hooks; one limiting Chinook salmon anglers to a single barbless hook after achieving the daily or annual bag limit; and one limiting fisheries, restricted to catch and release, to single, barbless hooks. All 3 proposals failed.

There were no proposals carried by the BOF at the 2011 meeting in Valdez that affected any UCUSMA Chinook salmon fisheries.

### ***Current or Recommended Research and Management Activities***

Assessment of the genetic structure of Copper River Chinook salmon stocks included sampling from the Tonsina, Tazlina, and Klutina drainages (Seeb et al. 2006, 2009). These drainages appear to have a similar genetic structure that is distinct from the Gulkana and Upper Copper River Chinook salmon stocks. Further genetic sampling and analysis may be helpful in further delineation of Chinook salmon in these 3 drainages.

Management of the Tonsina River would benefit from continuation of the NVE/LGL Chinook salmon population estimates.

## **SOCKEYE SALMON SPORT FISHERIES**

### ***Background and Historic Perspective***

In the UCUSMA, only the Copper River drainage supports wild and enhanced stocks of sockeye salmon. Wild stocks are widely distributed and are present in approximately 125 of the Upper Copper River tributaries, whereas enhanced stocks are limited to the Gulkana River, from production at the Gulkana Hatchery near Paxson. The abundance of salmon migrating into the Copper River has been estimated annually since 1978 by sonar at Miles Lake. Although there is no species apportionment program in place, it is assumed that most of the fish passing the sonar are sockeye salmon. Sonar counts are discontinued prior to the end of the sockeye run by July 31 each year before significant numbers of coho salmon enter the river. With the exception of 1993–1995, the escapement of sockeye salmon to Upper Copper River tributaries has been documented from 1966–2014 by the Division of Commercial Fisheries through aerial index counts to monitor spawner distribution in the drainage (Pirtle 1980; Randall et al. 1981; Brady et al. 1991; Hollowell et al. 2007; Sheridan et al. 2014; Wiese et al. 2015).

From 2009–2013 sport harvest of sockeye salmon from UCUSMA waters averaged 17,200 fish (Table 10). The sockeye salmon sport harvest in 2014 (18,005 fish) was the fourth highest recorded and was dominated by the Klutina River, where 17,004 sockeye were harvested. The primary sport fisheries for sockeye salmon occur in the Klutina and Gulkana rivers, accounting for an average of 96% of the UCUSMA sockeye salmon harvest from 2004–2013.

In addition to harvest in the tributary based recreational fisheries, sockeye salmon stocks of the Upper Copper River drainage are harvested in the Copper River District commercial drift gillnet fishery, the Chitina Subdistrict personal use fishery, and the Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence fishery (Table 11). The management of these fisheries is based on the abundance of all Copper River drainage stocks as counted past the Miles Lake sonar station. Under the *Copper River District Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 24.360), ADF&G is directed to manage the commercial fishery to achieve an inriver allocation of 15,000 salmon (all species) for sport fishery harvest, 61,000–82,500 sockeye salmon (wild stocks only) for subsistence harvest, 100,000–150,000 (including hatchery stocks) for personal use harvest, 360,000–750,000 sockeye

salmon for spawning escapement, 17,500 for spawning escapement of other salmon, and an amount determined annually for hatchery brood and surplus stocks.

The Klutina River (Figure 2) has consistently supported the largest sockeye salmon sport fishery in the UCUSMA (Table 10). Sockeye salmon begin entering the Klutina River in mid-June and continue through August. The Klutina River accounted for 33–54% of the sockeye salmon radiotagged in the Copper River from 2005 to 2009 (Wade et al. 2010; Table 12). Spawning activity is known to occur in various locations of the river, lake, and tributaries.

The Gulkana River supports the second largest sockeye salmon sport fishery in the UCUSMA. The sockeye salmon run to the Gulkana River is composed of both wild and hatchery stocks and has accounted for 7–19% of the sockeye salmon radiotagged in the Copper River from 2005–2009 (Wade et al. 2010; Table 12). The Gulkana Hatchery has been producing sockeye salmon since the early 1970s, and in the late 1990s produced enhanced returns of up to 800,000 adult salmon (Sharp et al. 2000). A strontium chloride otolith-marking program was begun for hatchery fish in 2000. Issues with the strontium-marking process caused mortality in marked sockeye salmon fry during brood years 2000 and 2001, significantly reducing adult returns (primarily 2004–2006) from those brood years. Since 2000, hatchery returns have ranged from about 86,000 to 581,000 sockeye salmon (S. Moffitt, Commercial Fisheries Biologist, ADF&G, Cordova; personal communication).

Gulkana River sockeye salmon life history and stock status data are limited beyond basic run timing data. Spawning takes place in several upper reach tributaries and lakes. The Gulkana River sockeye salmon return begins in early June and continues into September. The hatchery enhanced return has a run timing that overlaps the late wild stock component. A weir was operated downstream of the West Fork in 1996 (LaFlamme 1997). An estimated 183,461 sockeye salmon passed the weir from June 11 to July 31. The proportion of the total run that this count represented is unknown, as the weir was operated only through a portion of the sockeye salmon run. Except for the period from 1993–1999, escapement of sockeye salmon to the Gulkana River has been documented by aerial index counts since 1966 (Brady et al. 1991; Hollowell et al. 2007; Sheridan et al. 2014; Wiese et al. 2015).

Sockeye salmon passage has been recorded at a Chinook salmon counting tower project initiated in 2002 on the mainstem Gulkana River upstream of the West Fork (Taras and Sarafin 2005; Perry-Plake et al. 2007; Perry-Plake and Antonovich 2009; Perry-Plake and Huang 2011; Savereide 2010, 2011; Maclean 2013; Schwanke *In prep*). These counts are considered minimums because sockeye salmon are still passing the tower site after the tower project ends. From 2002–2015, an estimated 11,400 to 48,024 sockeye salmon (including hatchery fish) passed the tower from May 27 to August 14 each year (Schwanke *In prep*).

### ***Recent Fishery Performance***

Sockeye salmon harvest from the Klutina River has increased dramatically since 2006 and has continued to remain high (Table 10). Sockeye salmon harvests from the Klutina River averaged 15,061 fish from 2009–2013, compared to the average harvest from 1996–2005 of 5,629 sockeye salmon and the previous high harvest of 7,219 sockeye salmon in 2000. In 2011, the sockeye salmon sport harvest dropped closer to the historic average, with 6,025 sockeye salmon harvested, but rebounded in 2012 and 2013 to the highest reported harvest of 21,564 and 23,721 fish respectively. A total of 17,004 sockeye salmon were harvested from the Klutina River in 2014. Annual aerial surveys of the Klutina River drainage indicate that the high sport harvests of

sockeye salmon since 2006 are coincident with historically high aerial survey indices in Mahlo and St. Anne creeks during 2006–2014 (Botz et al. 2010, 2012, 2013; Sheridan et al. 2013, 2014, Wiese et al. 2015). Additionally, the highest proportional return of radiotagged sockeye salmon to the Klutina River occurred in 2006 (44.5) and 2007 (54.2) during a 5-year study conducted from 2005 through 2009 (Smith et al. 2005 a-b; Wade et al. 2007-2010).

Sport harvest of sockeye salmon from the Gulkana River peaked in 1996 with a harvest of 7,418 sockeye salmon (Table 10). Returns of hatchery produced sockeye salmon peaked from 1996–2000 with total hatchery runs ranging from 474,000 to 1,119,000 sockeye salmon (Sharp et al. 2000). Sockeye salmon sport harvest declined after 2000, reaching a low of only 575 sockeye harvested from the Gulkana River in 2008. In 2014, sport anglers harvested 709 sockeye salmon in the Gulkana River. Sockeye salmon returns in the Gulkana River are currently underutilized by sport anglers primarily due to the late timing of enhanced sockeye salmon and low Chinook salmon returns that have led to overall reduced fishing effort on the river.

### ***Fishery Objectives and Management***

Sockeye salmon fisheries in the Copper River are managed to provide for sustained yield, diversity of public fishing opportunities and access, and to achieve public benefits from the fishery that outweigh the costs of associated management and research. Escapement objectives for individual rivers within the Copper River drainage have not been established.

Current levels of sport, personal use, commercial, and subsistence harvests are believed sustainable. The present management guidelines of the commercial, personal use, and subsistence fisheries are also thought to provide sustainability of the Copper River sockeye salmon stocks. If future Miles Lake sonar counts indicate significant decreases in abundance or if harvests increase to the point that ADF&G believes that sustained yields are threatened, then additional regulatory actions will be considered.

Sport harvest of sockeye salmon is monitored through the SWHS. Harvest of sockeye salmon in the personal use and subsistence fisheries is monitored through a permit and mandatory reporting of harvest in those fisheries.

### ***Current Issues and Fishery Outlook***

Issues and conflicts involving the Gulkana and Klutina rivers sockeye salmon fisheries are similar to those previously noted for the Chinook salmon fishery. Prior to 2006, angler effort on the Klutina River was primarily directed toward Chinook salmon, but since 2006 it appears angler effort has been equally or more directed toward sockeye salmon. It appears unlikely that sport angler harvest of sockeye salmon will have any significant impact on the Klutina River stocks. Even at its third-highest level in 2007, the sport harvest of sockeye salmon composed less than 10% of the probable total return to the Klutina River, based on the radiotelemetry distribution data.

### ***Recent Board of Fisheries Actions***

There were no proposals submitted during the 2011 and 2014 BOF cycles that affected sockeye salmon sport fisheries in the UCUSMA.

### ***Current or Recommended Research and Management Activities***

Sockeye salmon sport fish harvests will continue to be monitored with the SWHS. An aerial index count program was reinstated in 2000 for index escapement estimates on priority spawning

areas of the drainage. The present management guidelines for the commercial, personal use, and subsistence fisheries are thought to assure sustainability of the Gulkana and Klutina River sockeye salmon stocks.

Future fisheries research on sockeye salmon should be directed towards a better understanding of sport harvest, effort, and fishing patterns through a creel survey and studies of specific life history components of Klutina and Gulkana river sockeye salmon. Additionally, determining the proportion of hatchery produced sockeye in the Gulkana River sport harvest could be helpful to future management of that fishery.

## **COPPER RIVER PERSONAL USE AND SUBSISTENCE SALMON FISHERIES**

### ***Background and Historical Perspective***

There is a long history of salmon harvest in the Copper River drainage. Ahtna natives took salmon, mostly Chinook and sockeye, with funnel traps and spears in clearwater tributaries. Haley Creek was the site of one of many traditional fishing camps along the Copper River. By 1920, fish wheels had replaced dip nets as the primary means of capturing salmon in the mainstem Copper River, but weirs and funnel traps were used in clear water tributaries until the 1940s. The use of dip nets to capture salmon in the Copper River began to increase in the 1940s and 1950s as more residents from outside the Copper River Basin communities participated in the Copper River fisheries.

Historically, the taking of salmon for consumption as food, use as trapping and fishing bait, or use as dog food in the Copper River drainage has been governed under subsistence regulations. Since 1960, participants in the Copper River subsistence fisheries have been required to have a subsistence fishing permit and record all salmon harvested in the Copper River by species, location, and date. In 1977, due to growth in the subsistence fishery, the BOF created the Chitina and Glennallen subdistricts. At this time, due to the potential “fishing power” from the large number of participants in the Chitina Subdistrict, fishing time for fish wheels was allowed only 4 days a week, and dip nets were allowed 7 days a week. In 1978, Alaska passed its first subsistence law. This legislation recognized the “customary and traditional use” of fish and game harvest in Alaska and gave this harvest a priority over other harvests. The BOF adopted the *Copper River Subsistence Salmon Fisheries Management Plan* (5 AAC 01.647) in 1980. Under this plan, subsistence fishers were given 1 of 4 classes of permits depending upon their locality to the fishery, income, age, and past use. During times of low escapement, Copper River Basin residents received priority over non-basin residents. The current version of this management plan establishes seasons, open areas, legal gears, permit requirements, and bag limits for a subsistence salmon fishery in the Copper River. The plan also directs ADF&G to manage the Copper River District commercial salmon fishery to ensure adequate spawning escapement and that upriver subsistence needs are met.

In 1980, ANILCA established a priority subsistence use of fish and game for federally-qualified residents on lands and waters for which the federal government asserts jurisdiction. The State of Alaska has also established a priority for subsistence use of fish and game by Alaskan residents (AS 16.05.258) on all lands and waters, but cannot discriminate between rural and urban residents (Alaska State Constitution Article VIII, sections 3 and 15). Because of this difference, the federal government asserted authority to ensure a priority subsistence use of fish and game for rural residents on federal lands and certain adjacent waters. To comply with ANILCA, the Joint Boards of Fisheries and Game adopted a regulation in 1982 stating that only “rural”

residents had “customary and traditional use” of fish and game and established 8 criteria for identifying “customary and traditional uses.” This regulation excluded many individuals from participating in Copper River subsistence fisheries, thereby precluding them from harvesting fish for their personal use. This led the BOF to establish personal use fisheries in 1982 (5 AAC 77.001). These fisheries were created to provide Alaskans who became ineligible to harvest fish under new subsistence regulations the opportunity to harvest fish for consumption as food or use as bait. Personal use fisheries, like commercial and sport fisheries, were not given a “priority” in terms of allocation as with subsistence fisheries. In 1989, the McDowell decision reversed the “rural preference” and once again allowed all Alaskan residents to participate in subsistence fisheries under state regulations.

Personal use fisheries differ from sport fisheries in both their objectives and management. Both fisheries provide Alaskans the opportunity to harvest fish for personal consumption (in either fishery fish cannot be sold or bartered), but personal use fisheries are managed to maximize harvest potential whereby sport fisheries are managed to provide diversity of opportunity. Anyone can participate in Alaska’s sport fisheries (provided they have a sport fishing license), but only Alaska *residents* may participate in personal use fisheries. DSF manages most of the state’s freshwater personal use fisheries, while the Division of Commercial Fisheries manages most of the subsistence fisheries and saltwater personal use fisheries. However, the Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence fishery in the Upper Copper River District is managed by DSF.

In 1984, based on analysis of the 8-point criteria found in 5 AAC 99.010, the BOF created a personal use salmon fishery in the Copper River drainage under the *Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan* (5 AAC 77.590). At its December 1999 meeting, the BOF ruled in favor of a positive C&T determination for the Chitina Subdistrict and this fishery became a subsistence fishery (5 AAC 01.647(k)). Along with classifying the Chitina Subdistrict as a subsistence use area, the annual limit of Chinook salmon was reduced from 4 to 1 fish. In February 2003, the BOF reversed its positive C&T determination for the Chitina Subdistrict and reinstated the *Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan* (5 AAC 77.591). The BOF viewed this as a name and allocation priority change only. Management of the fishery continued as it had prior to the 1999 ruling, based upon the number of fish passing the Miles Lake sonar. The Chinook salmon annual limit for the fishery was left at 1 fish.

Harvests in the Copper River subsistence and personal use fisheries are dominated by sockeye salmon, followed by Chinook and coho salmon (Table 1). Both subsistence and personal use salmon fisheries in the Copper River drainage have undergone changes since their inception. Currently, all Alaskans are eligible to participate in the subsistence fishery based on the McDowell decision in 1989. The Glennallen Subdistrict Subsistence Salmon fishery occurs upstream of the Chitina–McCarthy Bridge to Slana and can be prosecuted with fish wheels or dip nets (Figure 4). The season is open from June 1 through September 30, unless closed by EO. Only Alaska residents may participate in this subsistence fishery. A free subsistence permit is required to participate in the fishery. Users must record their harvest on their permit prior to leaving the fishing site and return the permit upon completing fishing for the season. The limits are 30 salmon for a household of 1, 60 salmon for a household of 2, and 10 salmon for each additional person in a household of more than 2 people. Individuals may request additional salmon up to a maximum of 200 salmon and households may request up to 500 salmon. For people using dip nets, only 5 of the salmon may be Chinook salmon. A subsistence fishery is

also allowed in a portion of Tanada Creek with spears and dip nets and near the traditional Ahtna Native fishing site of Batzulnetas with a fish wheel or dip net.

The Chitina Subdistrict Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery is opened each year by EO between June 7 and June 15. The mainstem Copper River between the downstream edge of the Chitina–McCarthy Bridge and a department marker located about 200 yards upstream of Haley Creek (in Wood Canyon) is open to personal use fishing (Figure 4). Both a valid Alaska sport fishing license and a free personal use permit are required to participate in the fishery. From 1991–1999, a fee of \$10 was attached to the permit and from 2000–2003, the permit fee was \$25. A portion of this fee was paid to Ahtna and Chitina Native Corporations for access across their lands. The permit fee was discontinued after 2003 and Chitina Native Corporation established their own access fee program for access across their lands.

Users must record their harvest on their permit prior to leaving the fishing site and return the permit when they are done fishing for the season or by October 15. The limits are 15 salmon for a single person and 30 salmon for a household of 2 or more, only 1 of which may be a Chinook salmon. Only dip nets may be used to harvest salmon in this fishery. The BOF has mandated that a household may not be issued both a Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence salmon fishing permit and a Chitina Subdistrict personal use salmon fishing permit in the same year.

Prior to 1997, maximum harvest for the Chitina Subdistrict was 60,000 salmon, with 25% of fish in excess of the inriver goal allocated to the personal use fishery. From 1997–1999, maximum harvest for the Chitina Subdistrict was 100,000 salmon, excluding fish in excess of the inriver goal and not including any salmon harvested after August 31. In 1998, the BOF adopted a proposal that allows permit holders, who have filled their original limit, to take 10 additional sockeye salmon in weeks when a harvestable surplus of 50,000 salmon or greater will be available in the Chitina Subdistrict. This supplemental harvest is exclusive of the maximum harvest level. Supplemental harvest periods occurred every year since this provision was adopted with the exception of 2003 and 2009. From 2000–2002, as a subsistence fishery, the Chitina Subdistrict had a harvest range of 100,000–150,000 salmon, of which 85,000–130,000 were wild salmon. This target harvest range remained in place following the change of the Chitina Subdistrict back to a personal use fishery in 2003.

In 1999, federal management of the Copper River subsistence fisheries was initiated, primarily due to the State not complying with rural preference for subsistence uses as mandated by ANILCA. At that time, the federal system adopted the state regulations and as federal and state regulations were identical, both federal and state subsistence users participated in the fisheries under the state subsistence permit. In 2001, federally qualified subsistence users were able to begin fishing on May 15 in the Glennallen Subdistrict. Federal subsistence limits remained identical to state limits, so federal subsistence users still fished under state subsistence permits. In 2002, the FSB established a federal subsistence fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict with an annual cumulative limit of 200 salmon for a household of 1 and 500 salmon for a household of 2 or more for both the Chitina and Glennallen subdistricts. Federal subsistence users are able to participate in both fisheries, while state subsistence users must select either the Chitina Subdistrict or Glennallen Subdistrict in which to participate. As a result, the National Park Service issued separate federal subsistence fishing permits to federally qualified subsistence users beginning in 2002 (Appendices C1 and D1). Although this change did not affect overall subsistence harvest from the Copper River, the number of state permits issued decreased after

2001 (Table 13), with at least a portion of the federally qualified residents opting for a federal rather than state permit.

Annual harvests from the Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence fishery have been estimated since 1965. The fishery experienced rapid growth from 1980 through 1983, when a peak harvest of about 119,000 salmon was taken (Somerville 2008). Under the subsistence fishery management plan, harvests decreased substantially in 1984 to about 29,000 salmon. Subsistence harvests gradually increased from 1984 through 2001 and held between 60,000 and 90,000 fish annually through 2013, including that portion of the harvest taken through federal subsistence permits (Table 13, Appendix D1).

Harvests in the Chitina Subdistrict fishery have been estimated since its establishment in 1984. From 1984 through 1988, harvests remained relatively stable, averaging about 47,000 salmon annually (Somerville 2008). After 1988, harvests in the personal use fishery generally increased through 1999. The harvest from the Chitina Subdistrict fishery declined from 1999–2003 to levels similar to the early 1990s (Table 14). From 2003–2007, the harvest steadily increased again before dropping off to 2003 levels in 2008 and 2009. Overall harvest from the Chitina Subdistrict fishery generally tracks with the number of permits fished in respective years (Table 14). The 2014 combined state and federal harvest of 161,149 salmon was the second highest harvest from the Chitina Subdistrict (Table 14, Appendix C1).

Sockeye are the primary species harvested in the Glennallen Subdistrict, whereas Chinook salmon make up less than 5% and coho salmon less than 1% of the annual harvest (Table 13). Chinook salmon were traditionally present in the Glennallen and Chitina Subdistrict fisheries by June 1 and, on average, 80% of the Chinook salmon harvest was taken by July 12 and 95% by July 25 (Roberson and Whitmore 1991). Chinook salmon run timing and harvest rates have remained similar to these trends through 2008.

### ***Recent Fishery Performance***

Total inriver salmon counts at Miles Lake were at record high levels in 2012, 2013, and 2014, with all 3 years exceeding counts of 1.2 million fish. In 2015, the total Miles Lake sonar count was over 1.3 million fish. These large returns have been reflected in the Chitina Subdistrict personal use and Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence harvests in these years.

A total of 1,656 state and 314 federal permits (1,970 total permits) were issued for the Glennallen Subdistrict in 2014 (Table 13; Appendix D1), which is the highest number of permits issued for the Glennallen Subdistrict since 1983. In 2015, 1,632 state and 297 federal permits were issued. The total permits issued (state and federal) have increased steadily since 1991 in the Glennallen Subdistrict. The number of permits issued for the Glennallen Subdistrict have gradually risen since the 1980s (Somerville 2008) and first broke 1,000 permits in 1997 when 286 permits were issued for dip netting and 847 were issued for using a fish wheel. Total participation in this fishery continues to increase, but most of the increase is by people using dip nets to harvest their fish. Of the 1,632 state issued permits in 2015, 1,128 of them were for dip netting and 504 were for using fish wheels.

Total harvest from the Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence fishery for 2014 was 100,683 salmon, including the federal harvest (Table 13; Appendix D1), which is the highest harvest in this fishery since 1983. Total harvest under state permits has averaged 68,055 salmon over the last 10 years (2004–2013) (Table 13), while total harvest under federal permits has averaged 16,167

salmon (Appendix D1). The 2014 harvest under state permits was 77,131 salmon and under federal permits was 23,552 salmon.

A total of 11,717 state and 113 federal permits (11,830 total permits) were issued for the Chitina Subdistrict personal use fishery in 2014 (Table 14, Appendix C1), which is the highest number of permits issued for the Chitina Subdistrict. Of the permits issued, 61% were actually fished in 2014. Total harvest from the Chitina Subdistrict for 2014 was 161,149 salmon including the federal harvest, which is the second largest harvest since the fishery was established in 1984 (Table 14; Appendix C1). Salmon passage by the Miles Lake sonar was 1.218 million fish, participation in the Chitina Subdistrict fishery was high, but river levels often interrupted fishing success through the 2014 season. Total harvest under state permits has averaged 135,465 salmon over the last 10 years (2004–2013) (Table 14), while total harvest under federal permits has averaged 1,691 salmon (Appendix C1). The 2014 harvest under state permits was 159,392 salmon and under federal permits was 1,757 salmon.

### ***Fishery Objectives and Management***

The Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence fishery is managed under the *Copper River Subsistence Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 01.647). This plan stipulates management objectives and guidelines, with allocations for each fishery outlined in the *Copper River District Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 24.360). In 2005, the BOF amended the amounts necessary for subsistence (ANS) for the Glennallen Subdistrict (5 AAC 01.616). These amounts are 25,500–39,000 salmon for the portion of the subdistrict from the Chitina–McCarthy Bridge upstream to the mouth of the Tonsina River; 23,500–31,000 salmon from the Tonsina River to the mouth of the Gakona River; and 12,000–12,500 salmon from the Gakona River to the mouth of the Slana River (and including the Batzulnetas fishery). The ANS amounts are based on the combined reported state and federal harvest, not the final estimated harvest, which expands the reported harvest to account for unreturned permits.

Inseason management of the Chitina Subdistrict personal use dip net salmon fishery is guided by the objectives and guidelines in the *Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan* (5 AAC 77.591). The weekly fishing periods and limits established by EO are based on the projected inriver returns. Actual inriver returns are estimated inseason by sonar located at Miles Lake. The harvest is distributed throughout the season, based upon the projected sonar counts. Adjustments are made to the preseason schedule based on the actual sonar counts, by increasing or decreasing fishing time. Prior to the 2015 season, when ADF&G determined that a weekly harvestable surplus of 50,000 salmon or more will be present in the Chitina Subdistrict, a supplemental permit for 10 additional fish was available to a permit applicant that has already met their annual limit. This provision was removed from regulation beginning with the 2015 season. The maximum harvest level (based on historical harvest levels) for the Chitina Subdistrict is 100,000–150,000 salmon, not including salmon above the inriver goal or salmon harvested after August 31. The fishery is open by regulation through the month of September.

In 2014, the Chitina Subdistrict personal use fishery season was opened by EO on June 7 for a 48-hour fishing period. Actual salmon numbers past the Miles Lake sonar during the week of May 19–25 were above projected counts by over 79,000 fish. Due to a greater than 50,000 salmon surplus above the weekly salmon escapement objective, the first period was also a supplemental period. Salmon numbers past the Miles Lake sonar for the weeks of May 26–June 1 and June 2–June 8 remained above the projected salmon counts by over 50,000 fish, allowing



the second (week of June 9) and third (week of June 16) fishing periods to remain at 168 hours and open as supplemental periods. The Chinook salmon run to the Copper River was weaker than the preseason forecast of 62,000 Chinook salmon and the run timing earlier than average. The cumulative commercial harvest, as of June 7, was the 4th lowest cumulative harvest through that date since 1980. Catch rates in the Native Village of Eyak research fish wheels through June 7 were the lowest since 2003. Catch rates of Chinook salmon in the personal use and subsistence fisheries were below expected levels. A precautionary management approach in the Upper Copper River fisheries warranted action in the personal use dip net fishery to attain a spawning escapement of 24,000 or more Chinook salmon to the Copper River. Beginning with the third period, on June 16, the Chitina Subdistrict was closed to the retention of Chinook salmon. The fishery opened for the fourth period by EO for 168 hours on June 23 as scheduled and remained opened through next period. The fishery remained open during the sixth and seventh periods, which were both supplemental periods. The fishery was open during the eighth period for 144 hours, an increase of 72 hours over the preseason schedule of 84 hours. Fishing time was increased by 24 hours to a total of 168 hours during the ninth period, which, due to a greater than 50,000 salmon surplus above the weekly salmon escapement objective, was a supplemental period. The fishery remained open during the tenth period, which was also a supplemental period. After the tenth period, the fishery remained open by EO from August 11–31 and was then open by regulation through September 30.

In 2015, the Chitina Subdistrict personal use fishery season was opened by EO on June 7 for a 24-hour fishing period. Actual salmon numbers past the Miles Lake sonar during the week of May 18–24 were above projected counts by over 64,058 fish. Salmon numbers past the Miles Lake sonar remained between 30,000 and 102,000 fish above the preseason projections each week throughout fishing periods 2–9. Therefore, the fishery was opened by EO for a full 168 hours each of those weeks. After the ninth period, the fishery remained open by EO from August 3–31 and was then open by regulation through September 30.

### ***Current Issues and Fishery Outlook***

Access to the Glennallen and Chitina Subdistrict fisheries is an ongoing issue. Currently, access is allowed across Chitina Native Corporations (CNC) lands with payment of a daily or annual fee paid directly to CNC. Ahtna and CNC land enforcement officers monitor compliance with the fee-based access system. There is also sufficient access across State of Alaska lands to accommodate dip netters and subsistence fishermen unwilling to pay for access.

The Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence fishery has seen the number of permits issued gradually increase over the last 20 years (Table 13). The ANS designations established in 2006 increased the overall allocation for subsistence harvest from 75,000 salmon to 82,500 salmon. The interest in the Copper River subsistence fisheries is unlikely to diminish under current management guidelines. If decreasing returns or additional regulations restrict the Chitina Subdistrict personal use fishery, a portion of those using this fishery may shift to the subsistence fishery. Increased pressure in the subsistence fishery will exacerbate access conflicts and conflicts between rural and non-rural users of the fishery.

### ***Recent Board of Fisheries Actions***

At the 2011 BOF meeting in Valdez, a proposal to restrict the Copper River District commercial drift gillnet fishery from fishing within the inside closure area during its first 2 statistical weeks was amended and carried. As a result, the Copper River District commercial fishery was limited

to a single 12-hour opener in the inside closure area during the first 2 weeks of the fishery, and the Chitina Subdistrict personal use dip net fishery opening dates were delayed from opening as early as June 1 and no later than June 11 to opening no earlier than June 7 but prior to June 15. These changes were made to increase the number of early run sockeye and Chinook salmon into the Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence fishery and increase spawning escapement for these early run timing stocks.

A second proposal was carried and added language to the *Copper River King Salmon Management Plan* providing guidance and authority to the department to restrict Chinook salmon harvest for conservation in the Chitina Subdistrict personal use and Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence fisheries.

A total of 10 proposals potentially affecting the UCUSMA subsistence and personal use fisheries were submitted for consideration during the 2014 BOF meeting in Cordova. A proposal to allow ADF&G to establish and modify bag limits for Chinook salmon in the subsistence fishery was carried. The change allows ADF&G to establish a bag limit for Chinook salmon taken by fish wheel; reduce the bag limit for Chinook salmon taken by fish wheel or dip net; prohibit the retention of Chinook salmon by either fish wheel or dip net; or to modify methods and means to achieve the Chinook salmon escapement goals. A second proposal was adopted that changed the annual limit in the Chitina Subdistrict personal use dip net fishery from 15 salmon for a household of one and 30 salmon for a household of 2 or more to 25 salmon per permit holder and 10 additional salmon for each additional household member, of which no more than one may be a Chinook salmon. This action also rescinded the supplemental periods allowing the taking of an additional 10 sockeye salmon when a surplus of 50,000 or more salmon was available. Proposals prohibiting the use of monofilament webbing in dip nets, requiring that Chinook salmon be kept in the water prior to release, that a check station be re-established in Chitina for harvest reporting in both the Glennallen and Chitina subdistricts, opening the Chitina Subdistrict 6 days earlier, repealing the 13-day commercial closure trigger for lowering the maximum allowable harvest, establishing a 3,000 fish allocation of Chinook salmon, requiring charter operators to maintain daily logbooks and record client harvests, and reducing the maximum harvest to 100,000 salmon were all rejected or had no action taken.

### ***Current or Recommended Research and Management Activities***

Daily sampling in the Chitina Subdistrict personal use fishery (sockeye and Chinook salmon) and Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence fishery (Chinook salmon only) is conducted from the opening of the fishery in June through the majority of the sockeye salmon run at the end of August. Otoliths and length of sockeye harvested in the fishery are collected. Otoliths are examined to determine age and for the presence of a strontium chloride mark that was imprinted on hatchery sockeye fry prior to release from the Gulkana River hatchery. The collected data are used to estimate hatchery contribution to the Copper River sockeye salmon run and to determine age and length composition of the Chitina Subdistrict sockeye salmon harvest. Scales and length data are collected from Chinook salmon harvested in both fisheries for use in stock composition models. Sampling technicians provide a department presence in the Chitina area 6 days per week. They also monitor compliance with fishery regulations, educate subsistence and personal use fishers on the regulations and emergency orders, and note any violations observed.

The Native Village of Eyak continues to conduct a mark-recapture study on Chinook salmon to estimate total inriver abundance past the Miles Lake sonar and conducted a similar study on

sockeye salmon from 2007–2009. The sockeye salmon mark–recapture study was specifically designed to act as an independent validation of the Miles Lake sonar passage estimates and was discontinued following 2009 after determining the sonar counts appeared accurate (van den Broek 2008; 2009*a-b*).

## **RESIDENT SPECIES SUBSISTENCE FISHERIES**

### ***Background and Historical Perspective***

Freshwater subsistence fishing permits have been issued in the UCUSMA since 1960. The majority of permits issued have been for freshwater subsistence fishing with gillnets for whitefish between October 1 and March 31 in several area lakes. Prior to 2002, the maximum number of permits issued for subsistence fishing in any year was 10 in 1992 and 1997, and a maximum harvest of 2,976 fish in 1995 (Table 15). After 2002, the maximum number of permits issued was 28 in 2009 and a maximum harvest of 3,109 fish in 2007. From 2003–2012 an average of 18 permits were issued annually with a harvest of 1,636 fish. At the 2008 meeting, the BOF made a positive C&T determination for the freshwater fishes in the Prince William Sound Area, which includes the entire UCUSMA, with an ANS of 25,000–42,000 useable pounds of fish.

### ***Recent Fishery Performance***

The average harvest of whitefish from 2009–2013 was 1,537 fish, with an average incidental catch of nontarget species of 34 fish (Table 15). In 2014, 19 permits were issued for fishing whitefish with a gillnet. A total of 12 of these permits were fished, with a total reported harvest of 697 whitefish from a total of 3 lakes. Beginning in 2011, retention of any species other than whitefish or longnose suckers (*Catostomus catostomus*) from a gillnet was prohibited by permit stipulation. This change was made to remove any incentive for a permit holder to target lake trout or burbot with gillnets when fishing for whitefish. In 2014, 19 lake trout were reported caught in whitefish gillnets.

### ***Fishery Objectives and Management***

There are no specific fishery objectives or management plans for resident freshwater subsistence fisheries in the UCUSMA. Resident species are managed to provide for sustained yield. The current low number of participants in the winter gillnet fishery allows for liberal management of the whitefish harvest. However, slower-growing resident species such as lake trout and burbot are managed with bag limits similar to those in the sport fisheries for these species. More efficient gear is permitted for the abundant, high-productivity species (whitefish and longnose suckers), while selective harvest gear is permitted for the less abundant, low productivity species (lake trout and burbot).

### ***Current Issues and Fishery Outlook***

With low participation, the subsistence whitefish fishery garnered little notice from other user groups for several decades. The increase in subsistence permits in 2009 (generally for the road accessible fisheries of Lake Louise and Paxson Lake) and the incidental catch of popular sport species such as lake trout created concern among area sport anglers. This resulted in several letters from sport anglers to ADF&G and proposals requesting restrictions for the subsistence fishery submitted to the BOF. To address these concerns, ADF&G developed additional permit stipulations to ensure compliance with the fishery and to ensure sustainability of the various fish

populations within targeted waters. These measures appear to have been effective and conflict and concerns over this fishery have diminished.

#### ***Recent Board of Fisheries Actions***

A total of 15 proposals were submitted to the 2011 BOF meeting in Valdez specific to the UCUSMA freshwater subsistence fishery. These proposals mainly addressed the whitefish fishery in Lake Louise, as well as Susitna and Tyone lakes, and the harvest of lake trout. The BOF took no action on 6 of these proposals and 8 proposals failed. One proposal was amended and carried resulting in the closure of the channels between Lake Louise and Susitna Lake and between Susitna and Tyone lakes to the use of gillnets.

No proposals concerning freshwater subsistence fisheries were submitted to the BOF for the 2014 board cycle.

#### ***Current or Recommended Research and Management Activities***

Harvest in the freshwater finfish subsistence fishery is monitored through a permit system that requires permit holders to log their harvests on a daily basis and return their harvest reports at the end of the permit period. There are no research projects recommended specific to this fishery; however, research on resident species populations within the UCUSMA would provide data useful in the management of the freshwater finfish subsistence fishery.

### **WILD ARCTIC GRAYLING SPORT FISHERIES**

#### ***Background and Historical Perspective***

Wild Arctic grayling (does not include Arctic grayling stocked in lakes) were the most-harvested fish in the UCUSMA from 1977–1995 (Somerville 2008). Harvests declined after 1988 and have been surpassed nearly every year since 1996 by sockeye salmon and by Chinook salmon in 2005 and 2007 (Table 4). The decline in harvest from 1988–1999 most likely resulted from more restrictive regulations that reduced overall bag limits and limited anglers to only 1 fish 14 inches or larger in the Gulkana River drainage to ensure the sustained yield of the area's wild Arctic grayling stocks (Taube 2002). In 2003, the bag and possession limit in lakes was reduced to 5 wild Arctic grayling. Continued declines in harvest may reflect a general decline in fishing effort area wide since 2000.

Wild Arctic grayling are harvested throughout the UCUSMA. The Susitna River drainage averaged 38% of the total UCUSMA harvest from 2009–2013 (Table 16). The Gulkana River drainage accounted for 33% of the harvest during this period followed by smaller tributary streams in the Upper Copper River drainage (12%) and the Tazlina River drainage (8%).

Wild Arctic grayling are the most caught species in the UCUSMA (Table 5). As with harvest, catch has declined over the past decade, but wild Arctic grayling catch, on average, contributes 45% to the annual total catch of all species.

#### ***Recent Fishery Performance***

Harvest of wild Arctic grayling has averaged 3,721 fish over the last 10 years (2004–2013) and 3,750 fish over the last 5 years (2009–2013) (Table 16). Total harvest of wild Arctic grayling in 2014 was 2,264 fish, the second lowest ever reported (Somerville 2008).

### ***Fishery Objectives and Management***

Wild Arctic grayling fisheries in the UCUSMA are managed to maintain sustained yield and historic age and size composition and stock abundance while producing satisfactory catch rates for anglers (Roth and Alexandersdottir 1990). Harvest and catch of wild Arctic grayling are monitored by the SWHS.

The *Wild Arctic Grayling Management Plan* (5 AAC 52.055) was adopted in 2004 and designates 3 management approaches: regional, conservative, and special management. Most wild Arctic grayling fisheries in the UCUSMA fall under the regional management approach and are open to fishing all year, with or without bait, and a bag and possession limit of 5 fish with no size limit. Under the conservative management approach the fishery is open from June 1–March 31, may be limited to unbaited lures, and a bag and possession limit of 2 fish. Size limits may or may not be imposed. Four fisheries within the UCUSMA are classified under the conservative management approach: Mendeltna Creek (2 fish greater than or equal to 12 inches), Moose Lake and Our Creek in the Tazlina drainage (2 fish, no size limit), and the Gulkana River upstream of Paxson Lake (2 fish, only 1 fish greater than or equal to 14 inches, open all year). Under these regulations, the wild Arctic grayling stocks in the UCUSMA are able to support current harvest levels.

The bag limit for wild Arctic grayling in the remainder of the Gulkana River (5 fish, only 1 fish greater than or equal to 14 inches), which was established in 1986 (Taube 2002), deviates slightly from the 3 management approaches outlined in the *Wild Arctic Grayling Management Plan*. However, previous estimates of abundance indicate that current exploitation rates on the major stock units of wild Arctic grayling in the Gulkana River drainage appear sustainable given current harvest levels. Data from stock assessments also indicate that the restriction limiting anglers to only 1 fish greater than or equal to 14 inches allowed the population to reach and maintain historic levels (Fish and Roach 1999). A similar assessment was conducted in 2002 on the upper reaches to determine the impacts of the 1996 regulatory change to catch-and-release and provide background information for any future BOF proposals (Wuttig 2007). No stock assessments have been conducted on the Gulkana River since 2002.

### ***Current Issues and Fishery Outlook***

Overall, UCUSMA wild Arctic grayling fisheries appear sustainable. The current management strategies and regulatory regimes are within the guidelines of the management plan to manage for long-term sustained yield. As a result, it is anticipated that harvest levels of wild Arctic grayling will remain at sustainable levels.

### ***Recent Board of Fisheries Actions***

The BOF carried a proposal that aligned the *Wild Arctic Grayling Management Plan* (5 AAC 52.055) spawning closure dates (April 1–May 30) with those in area regulations (April 1–May 31) during the 2011 meeting in Valdez.

At its 2014 meeting in Cordova, the BOF rejected a proposal to increase the bag limit of Arctic grayling in the Gulkana River drainage to 10 fish, only 5 of which may be greater than 14 inches.

### ***Current or Recommended Research and Management Activities***

An objective of the wild Arctic grayling research program was to develop a plan for monitoring the status of wild Arctic grayling stocks in the Gulkana River drainage. This consisted of

monitoring of the 3 identified stocks (mainstem, Middle Fork, and waters upstream of Paxson Lake) for abundance, age, and length composition every 3 to 5 years. Stock assessments were conducted in 1998 (Fish and Roach 1999) and in 2002 (Wuttig 2007). It is recommended that a monitoring program continue, with stock assessment linked to an increase in harvest, to assure the sustained yield of the fishery.

## **LAKE TROUT SPORT FISHERIES**

### ***Background and Historical Perspective***

The UCUSMA is the only area in Alaska where numerous lake trout fisheries exist along the road system (Figure 5). Lake trout are harvested mainly from lakes within the Tyone River drainage (Lake Louise, Susitna and Tyone lakes) and the Gulkana River drainage (Paxson, Summit, and Crosswind lakes) (Table 17).

Prior to 1987, the bag limit in UCUSMA waters was 2 lake trout  $\geq 20$  inches and 10 lake trout  $< 20$  inches. Under these regulations, lake trout harvests from UCUSMA waters averaged about 7,400 fish annually (Somerville 2008). However, it was found that 8 of 9 lake trout populations in the Upper Copper River drainage were being harvested above sustainable levels, based on surplus production models developed from lake trout populations in Canada and the Great Lakes (Burr 1987). As a result of these findings, the bag limit for UCUSMA waters was reduced to 2 fish and a minimum size limit of 18 inches was adopted for Summit and Paxson lakes and Lake Louise, Susitna, and Tyone lakes in the Tyone River drainage in 1987. The minimum size limit was imposed to allow female lake trout to spawn once before reaching harvestable size.

In 1994, the minimum size limit for lake trout was increased from 18 to 24 inches in Lake Louise, Susitna, Tyone, Crosswind, Paxson and Summit lakes, and the bag and possession limit was reduced from 2 to 1 lake trout in Lake Louise, Susitna, Tyone, and Crosswind lakes. The minimum size limit was increased to allow lake trout to reach a size where they could spawn at least once before being recruited to the fishery and to reduce the harvest to a sustainable level in Paxson and Summit lakes. The bag limit reduction was imposed on lakes with lake trout of greater than average length to prevent effort from being concentrated on these size classes.

Following the 24-inch minimum size restriction, the number of lake trout released by anglers in Crosswind, Paxson, and Summit lakes and Lake Louise, Susitna, and Tyone lakes increased from an average of 60% released prior to the restriction (1990–1993) to an average 80% for all the years following (1994–2005). Although harvest decreased, the overall catch rate did not decrease and in many cases increased so that fishing mortality (harvest plus 10% of the catch minus the harvest, to account for hooking mortality of released fish) was still exceeding the sustainable yield levels in the larger UCUSMA lake trout fisheries.

ADF&G initiated a regional review of lake trout regulations and management in 2002 and developed a lake trout management plan that was adopted by the BOF in 2005 (Burr 2006). Based on this review and adoption of the management plan, the minimum size limit for lake trout was removed in Paxson and Summit lakes and the bag limit was set to 1 per day beginning in 2006. Additionally, the use of bait was prohibited from April 16–October 31. Bait was allowed from November 1–April 15 to provide for the burbot fishery. In 2012, these same regulations were implemented for Lake Louise, Susitna, Tyone, and Crosswind lakes, effectively aligning lake trout management in all large lakes with high angler effort and effective harvest rates that

consistently met or exceeded sustainable levels. These regulation changes are intended to reduce fishing mortality below the sustainable yield estimates for these lakes.

### ***Recent Fishery Performance***

Total harvest of lake trout averaged 1,201 fish from 2009–2013 (Table 17). Harvests from the Susitna River drainage accounted for 49% and the Gulkana River drainage accounted for 36% of the annual UCUSMA harvest from 2009–2013. Lake Louise (31%), Crosswind (14%), and Paxson (13%) lakes accounted for over half the annual average lake trout harvest in the UCUSMA from 2009–2013. The harvest of 819 lake trout from the UCUSMA in 2014 was below the 5- and 10-year averages and was the fourth lowest recorded harvest in the UCUSMA.

### ***Fishery Objectives and Management***

Lake trout fisheries in the UCUSMA are managed conservatively following the guidelines in the *Wild Lake Trout Management Plan* (5 AAC 52.060). ADF&G uses restrictive bag and size limits to maintain harvests below sustained yield. Assessment of lake trout stock status is currently based on evaluation of the SWHS harvest and catch (and associated hooking mortality) in relation to the sustained yield estimate. If total mortality exceeds the sustained yield estimate for several years, stock assessment is initiated for that population.

ADF&G uses the Lake Area model (Evans et al. 1991) to develop sustained yield thresholds for lake trout. The Lake Area model involves estimating the level of sustainable harvests for lakes based on an observed lake trout production and lake surface area relationship for northern latitude lakes. The Lake Area model provides an excellent general guideline for sustainable harvests, but is based on a large range of lakes and their observed sustainable yields. Therefore, the predicted annual yields are inherently imprecise (Burr 2006). The potential yield given by the Lake Area model is treated as a threshold that should not be exceeded rather than a target level of exploitation.

Because estimates of the average weight of lake trout from most lakes in the UCUSMA are unavailable, the sustainable harvest of lake trout has been estimated based on the probable range of lake trout weights (1.0 to 4.0 kg) depending on the area of the lake. Based on Evans et al. (1991) and these assumed weights, lakes in the UCUSMA that are less than 500 hectares appear capable of sustaining harvest and catch mortalities of 147 to 231 lake trout annually. Lakes larger than 500 hectares appear capable of sustaining annual harvest and catch mortalities of 320 to 585 lake trout. Estimates of sustained yield for the larger lake trout fisheries in the UCUSMA are found in Table 18.

### ***Current Issues and Fishery Outlook***

A reduced bag limit, prohibition of bait during the open water period, and removal of the size limit have reduced effective harvest in Paxson and Summit lakes to sustainable levels. These changes were implemented in 2006, and it was expected that the average release rate of lake trout would decline to the pre-24in size limit percentages of 48–54% as well. However, angler effort and harvest rates in these lakes have been too low to make an accurate assessment of release percentages since the regulation changes were implemented. Gulkana River drainage lakes have averaged 3,325 angler days over the last 10 years (2004–2013) (Table 3). Average angler effort from 1983–1992 was more than 7,474 angler days (Somerville 2008).

Effective harvest of lake trout in Lake Louise exceeded the sustainable yield predicted by the Lake Area model in 8 of 10 years from 2002–2011. Additionally, some lake trout have been

harvested as incidental take in gillnets targeting whitefish in the subsistence whitefish fishery on that lake. Beginning in 2012 the size limit for lake trout in Lake Louise, Susitna, Tyone, and Crosswind lakes was removed and anglers were limited to unbaited, single-hook artificial lures from April 16–October 30. Effective harvest of lake trout in Lake Louise was below the sustainable yield in 2012 (250 fish), 2013 (652 fish), and 2014 (406 fish). The average effective harvest of lake trout in all area lakes from 2009–2013 has remained below the estimated sustainable yield.

### ***Recent Board of Fisheries Action***

The BOF considered 7 proposals at its 2011 meeting in Valdez that addressed lake trout sport fisheries in the UCUSMA. Two proposals to implement spawning closures failed, as did 2 proposals banning commercial guiding on Lake Louise. Proposals to lengthen the time bait is allowed on Paxson and Summit lakes and impose a maximum size limit for lake trout on Lake Louise and Crosswind Lake also failed. The BOF adopted a proposal submitted by ADF&G to remove the size limit for lake trout and prohibit the use of bait from April 16–October 31 in Lake Louise, Susitna, Tyone, and Crosswind lakes. No proposals concerning area lake trout fisheries were submitted to the BOF for the 2014 board cycle

### ***Current or Recommended Research and Management Activities***

A research program was initiated in 1990 to evaluate the status of lake trout fisheries in the UCUSMA. The goal of the research program was to determine appropriate management strategies that assured the sustained yield of lake trout in UCUSMA lakes. The study was conducted primarily in Paxson Lake and Lake Louise. Annual results of the research projects are summarized in Szarzi (1992, 1993), Szarzi and Bernard (1994, 1995, 1997). Stock assessment was discontinued in 1995 for Paxson Lake and Lake Louise, but assessment in Paxson Lake was again conducted from 2002–2004 (Scanlon 2004; Wuttig 2010).

Length and weight data were collected from Lake Louise in the fall of 2006 and assessment to estimate abundance was to continue in 2007 and 2008. However, review of the past data indicated that movement of lake trout between Lake Louise, Susitna, and Tyone lakes may affect any estimate of abundance. Therefore, a more extensive research project must be developed including radiotelemetry to assess movement of lake trout between the 3 lakes prior to starting a mark–recapture study.

Lake trout research in Alaska lakes has provided a length–weight relationship, and future sampling can focus on collecting lengths alone. Length data for Susitna Lake and Crosswind Lake need to be collected to update the Lake Area model yield estimates. If harvest rates approach the estimates of sustainable yield calculated by the Lake Area model for Paxson and Summit lakes, stock abundance and size composition of lake trout should be reassessed to monitor any changes under the 2006 regulations.

## **BURBOT SPORT FISHERIES**

### ***Background and Historical Perspective***

Burbot fisheries occur primarily during the winter months from November to April, using closely attended lines. Many lakes and rivers of the UCUSMA historically contained large populations of burbot (Figure 5), and prior to 1990, these waters supported an average of 56% of the statewide sport harvest of this species (Somerville 2008). The largest fishery historically



occurred in Lake Louise, as well as Susitna and Tyone lakes (Table 19). Other fisheries occur in various lakes of the Gulkana River drainage (e.g., Paxson, Summit, and Crosswind lakes), Tazlina River drainage, and smaller remote lakes scattered throughout the UCUSMA.

With rapid growth in the fishery from 1979–1985, burbot stocks in the UCUSMA were in danger of being overexploited (Somerville 2008). A research program was initiated in 1986 to evaluate the life history of interior Alaska burbot and to determine stock status and sustained yields of burbot fisheries in the UCUSMA. Annual results of these studies are summarized in Lafferty et al. (1990–1992), Lafferty and Bernard (1993), Parker et al. (1987–1989), Schwanke and Bernard (2005*a-b*), Schwanke and Perry-Plake (2007), Schwanke (2009b), Taube et al. (1994, 2000), and Taube and Bernard (1995, 1999, 2001, 2004). Concern over the sustainability of burbot fisheries in the UCUSMA led to adoption of increasingly restrictive regulations and some complete fishery closures, most of which were reopened once stocks recovered (Somerville 2008).

More recent studies on burbot abundance have occurred in Crosswind, Tolsona, Tanada, and Copper lakes. An abundance survey of the burbot population in Crosswind Lake was conducted in 2006 and 2007 (Schwanke 2009b) to provide a basis to compare future estimates of abundance should harvest levels significantly change. The 2006 abundance of burbot (greater than or equal to 18 inches [450 mm]) in Crosswind Lake was 3,860 fish (90% CI = 2,262–5,549) and in 2007 it was 3,130 fish (90% CI = 2,170–4,091). Tolsona Lake was closed to burbot fishing by either EO or by regulation from 1998 through 2011. Stock assessment on Tolsona Lake occurred on an annual basis from 1986 to 2010, with a goal to open the fishery when the burbot population rebuilt to 1,500 burbot greater than or equal to 18 in (Taube and Bernard 2001). Based on results from 2008 and 2011 sampling, the burbot population achieved this abundance goal (Schwanke 2014). An abundance survey of the burbot population in Tanada (2007) and Copper (2008) lakes was conducted to provide a baseline data point for these lake populations. The 2007 abundance of burbot (greater than or equal to 18 in [450 mm]) in Tanada Lake was 2,217 fish (90% CI = 1,821–2,613) and in 2008 in Copper Lake was 943 fish (90% CI = 550–1,337).

### ***Recent Fishery Performance***

With the adoption of more conservative regulations in 1987, harvests of burbot from UCUSMA waters decreased (Somerville 2008). Total burbot harvest from the UCUSMA averaged 1,795 fish from 2009–2013 (Table 19). Total harvest of burbot from UCUSMA waters has ranged from 556–2,997 over that same period. Burbot harvest from the UCUSMA in 2014 was 158 fish, the lowest ever reported for this species.

### ***Fishery Objectives and Management***

The burbot fisheries in lakes of the UCUSMA are managed for sustained yield and opportunity to participate. The majority of burbot fisheries in the UCUSMA are monitored for trends in harvests estimated through the SWHS.

### ***Current Issues and Fishery Outlook***

Unattended setlines are an efficient method of fishing, but data clearly show burbot populations in UCUSMA lakes cannot sustain use of this method and it is therefore prohibited. Prohibition of unattended set lines in 1991 reduced burbot harvest in area lakes. Based on enforcement reports, some anglers still continue to use unattended set lines. ADF&G and AWT educate anglers to fish closely attended lines with clearly visible strike indicators. Prohibition of set lines also reduced mortality of lake trout caught on burbot gear.

Based upon current regulations, the harvest of burbot in the UCUSMA should remain stable. Winter weather conditions can dictate ice fishing effort in a given year; mild winter or late winter conditions can result in increased ice fishing effort. Annual fluctuations in harvest appear to be related to angler effort and winter weather conditions rather than a reflection of the abundance of burbot in specific lakes.

### ***Recent Board of Fisheries Actions***

The BOF opened Tolsona Lake to burbot fishing at the 2011 meeting in Valdez. The bag and possession limit was set at 2 burbot.

At the 2014 BOF meeting in Cordova the BOF carried a proposal seeks to replace UCUSMA specific language for burbot and reference the similar language in statewide regulation.

### ***Current or Recommended Research and Management Activities***

The burbot stock assessment program in the UCUSMA continues on a limited scale. Baseline data were collected on the Copper River burbot population in 2003 (Schwanke and Bernard 2005b). A monitoring program has been proposed for Lake Louise on a 3- to 5-year schedule. Lake Louise burbot populations were sampled in 1999 and again in 2005 to assess the impact of the fishery reopening in 2003 (Taube et al. 2000; Schwanke and Perry-Plake 2007). CPUE was estimated with baited hoop traps to monitor population trends. There was not a significant decline in burbot CPUE after Lake Louise was reopened. If future harvest levels increase significantly, the Lake Louise population should continue to be monitored.

## **WILD RAINBOW AND STEELHEAD TROUT SPORT FISHERIES**

### ***Background and Historical Perspective***

The Upper Copper River drainage is the northernmost extent of the natural range of rainbow and steelhead trout in North America. The area's widely distributed stocks of wild rainbow and steelhead trout display generally low production with little ability to sustain harvests. To assure that these stocks are not overexploited, a conservative regulation plan was developed and implemented in several Upper Copper River drainages to manage the fisheries targeting these stocks. This plan was guided by the *Upper Cook Inlet and Copper River Basin Rainbow/Steelhead Trout Management Policy* (CISFPT Unpublished).

In 1988, the waters of Lower Hanagita Lake and the Hanagita River from Lower Hanagita Lake to the Tebay River were restricted to catch-and-release for rainbow or steelhead trout. In 1990, the Gulkana River drainage fishery was restricted to catch-and-release. In 2005, the remainder of the Hanagita River drainage (upstream of Lower Hanagita Lake) and the Tebay River downstream of the Hanagita River confluence were included in the area closed to the retention (catch-and-release only) of rainbow or steelhead trout. Regulations restricting waters supporting rainbow/steelhead trout to only unbaited, single-hook, artificial lures were adopted for the flowing waters of Tebay River drainage in 1988, all flowing waters of the Gulkana River drainage above a point on the mainstem Gulkana River 7.5 miles upstream of the confluence of the West Fork in 1990, and for all flowing waters of the UCUSMA in 1999. Spawning closures were established around the identified rainbow or steelhead trout spawning areas on the Middle Fork of the Gulkana River in 1997 and Twelvemile Creek (a tributary of the Gulkana River) in 2003. Additionally, the retention of rainbow or steelhead trout incidentally caught in the Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery (Chitina Subdistrict) in 1997 was prohibited. Beginning in

2003, rainbow trout or steelhead trout caught by dip net in the subsistence salmon fishery (Glennallen Subdistrict) could not be retained.

Summit Lake and its outlet stream Bridge Creek in the Tebay drainage once constituted a unique rainbow trout fishery within the UCUSMA. Test netting, hook-and-line sampling, and visual surveys from 1982–1985 showed that these waters contained the largest nonanadromous rainbow trout in the Copper River drainage, with individual fish measuring over 32 inches in length and weighing up to 20 pounds (Williams and Potterville 1985). Sampling also indicated that the unique size structure of this population could not sustain high levels of harvest. Special regulations (bag limit of 1 fish greater than or equal to 32 inches) were established in 1988 for these waters to provide anglers the opportunity to harvest a “trophy trout” while maintaining the overall population structure. However, sampling in late 1990s (Fleming 2000) indicated that only 27% of all rainbow trout sampled (>3,000 fish) were greater than 12 inches, with a maximum size of 18 inches. As a result, the “trophy trout” regulations were repealed at the 1999 BOF meeting and changed to a bag and possession limit of 10 per day, maximum size limit of 12 inches, and an open season of July 1–May 31. In addition, ADF&G initiated a research study in 2002 to remove a percentage of rainbow trout from Summit Lake on an annual basis to reduce the population density to determine if growth can be promoted (Wuttig *In prep*).

All other waters supporting wild rainbow or steelhead trout stocks are managed under a 2-fish bag limit, of which only 1 fish may be greater than or equal to 20 inches. The season is year-round with the exception of the spawning closure (April 15–June 14) on the Middle Fork Gulkana River and Twelvemile Creek.

In 2003, the BOF adopted a statewide *Policy for the Management of Sustainable Wild Trout Fisheries* (5 AAC 75.222). This policy provides guidelines to the BOF and ADF&G for developing regulations and managing wild trout populations.

### ***Recent Fishery Performance***

A total of 240 wild rainbow trout were reported harvested from the UCUSMA in 2014, which is the fifth-lowest harvest ever recorded for this species (Table 4). Harvest from the Tazlina River drainage accounted for 68% of the 2013 harvest. The overall catch of 3,405 wild rainbow trout in 2014 was the lowest catch since 1983 and was below the 2009–2013 average of 4,459 fish (Table 20). Over the last 5 years (2009–2013) the Gulkana River drainage has accounted for 78% of the wild rainbow catch in the UCUSMA. The lower catch of wild rainbow trout in recent years coincides with low Chinook salmon returns and inseason restrictions in the Chinook salmon fishery that have led to overall reduced fishing effort on the Gulkana River.

No steelhead trout have been reported in the UCUSMA since 1999. The catch of steelhead trout in the UCUSMA declined from a high of 334 fish in 2000 to 58 steelhead trout in 2013. No steelhead trout were reported caught in 2014. The Gulkana River drainage accounted for 91% (29 fish) of the steelhead catch in the UCUSMA from 2009–2013. Historic trends in the area’s wild rainbow or steelhead fishery are difficult to ascertain, as annual harvest and catch estimates have been small and fluctuate markedly.

### ***Fishery Objectives and Management***

The wild rainbow trout and steelhead populations are managed under the guidelines in the *Upper Cook Inlet and Copper River Basin Rainbow/Steelhead Trout Management Policy* and the statewide *Policy for the Management of Sustainable Wild Trout Fisheries*.

### ***Current Issues and Fishery Outlook***

Rainbow trout and steelhead trout populations and distribution in the UCUSMA are still not fully understood. Some populations may yet be unidentified and may be reported through the SWHS periodically.

With adoption of more restrictive regulations, particularly in the Gulkana River drainage, harvests of rainbow trout have declined from the historic average (Table 4). No steelhead trout have been reported harvested in a UCUSMA sport fishery since 1999, when 8 fish were reported from other unspecified streams in the Upper Copper River drainage. Since 1999, the total UCUSMA catch of wild rainbow trout has ranged from a low of 3,405 to a high of 12,806, with no particular trend (Table 20).

Incidental harvest of steelhead occurs in the Glennallen Subdistrict (GSD) subsistence fishery using fish wheels. Total harvest of steelhead in the subsistence fishery has ranged 5–105, since 1995. It is likely that some steelhead were recorded as “other” fish and make up a portion of the reported harvest. However, this portion is expected to represent a very small percentage of the total “other” harvest in the GSD. The large majority of GSD participants stop fishing by September when the majority of steelhead are present in the Upper Copper River.

### ***Recent Board of Fisheries Actions***

At the 2011 meeting, the BOF changed the bag limit for rainbow trout in Summit Lake of the Tebay River drainage from 10 fish less than or equal to 12 inches to 10 fish less than or equal to 18 inches. The spawning closure in Bridge Creek, the outlet of Summit Lake, was also rescinded at this meeting. These actions were made to encourage sport harvest to try and maintain the large fish component in the Summit Lake rainbow trout population.

At the 2014 meeting in Cordova, the BOF carried a proposal seeking to align current rainbow trout bag limit regulations for Summit Lake in the Chitina River drainage with its outlet stream Bridge Creek.

### ***Ongoing or Recommended Research and Management Activities***

The research project initiated in 2002 to alter the size distribution of rainbow trout in Summit Lake by large-scale removal and relocation of fish was discontinued in 2013, but fish up to 23 inches (580 mm FL) were captured during the most recent sampling. Data from the project indicate that maximizing sport harvest of rainbow trout, up to an 18-inch length, is the most feasible regulatory means to attempt to maintain the improved size structure of the rainbow trout population in Summit Lake (Wuttig *In prep*). Due to the remote access of this fishery (fly-in only) it is doubtful sport harvest alone will maintain the current size structure.

Stock assessment of the Gulkana River rainbow trout population was initiated in 2004. The project objective was to estimate abundance of rainbow trout from Paxson Lake to 2 miles downstream of Sourdough, an index area 79 km long. Feasibility work was conducted in August and September of 2004 and a mark–recapture study was conducted in 2005 (Schwanke and Taras 2009). The abundance of rainbow trout greater than or equal to 11 inches (275 mm FL) was 5,238 fish (SE = 689; 95% CI = 3,888–6,588) and for rainbow trout 6–11 inches (160–274 mm FL) was 6,850 fish (SE = 1,023; 95% CI = 4,845–8,855). A radiotelemetry study was conducted on rainbow trout in the Gulkana River beginning in 2009. Approximately 100 rainbow trout were tagged and tracked. Previously undocumented spawning areas were identified in the West Fork

Gulkana and Gulkana River Mainstem above the confluence with the West Fork (Schwanke 2015).

A project to determine steelhead trout distribution using radiotelemetry was conducted in the Upper Copper River from 2004–2006. Feasibility work was conducted in September 2004 and the full project was conducted during fall 2005 and 2006 (Savereide 2005*b*, 2005*c*, 2008). Radiotagged fish migrated into the mainstem Chitina (26%), Tazlina (47%), and Gulkana (27%) rivers.

## **DOLLY VARDEN SPORT FISHERIES**

### ***Background and Historical Perspective***

Dolly Varden are primarily targeted by sport anglers in the Klutina and Tonsina river drainages. Resident populations are found throughout the Upper Copper River drainage with the exception of the Gulkana River drainage. No juvenile or adult fish have been captured during any of the ADF&G stock assessment projects on the Gulkana River. Dolly Varden have been reported in the SWHS as being caught in the Gulkana River, downstream of the Richardson Highway bridge, but these occurrences are rare. Based upon harvest and catch reports from the SWHS, some Dolly Varden occur in the Upper Susitna River drainage, though due to the barrier at Devils Canyon it is believed these are resident populations.

Sport fisheries in the Klutina and Tonsina river drainages have traditionally accounted for an average of 77–85% of the Dolly Varden harvest in the UCUSMA (Somerville 2008). These fisheries occur primarily in the Little Tonsina River and the Upper Klutina River. Harvests of Dolly Varden in the UCUSMA, peaked at 6,001 fish in 1985 (Somerville 2008). The bag and possession limit for Dolly Varden has been 10 per day since at least the early 1970s.

### ***Recent Fishery Performance***

Total harvest of Dolly Varden in the UCUSMA declined significantly after 2004 (Table 21). From 2000–2004, the annual harvest of Dolly Varden averaged 1,441 fish. Over the last 5 years (2009–2013) this average has been 720 fish. In 2014, the total harvest of Dolly Varden in UCUSMA waters was only 148 fish, the lowest ever reported for this species. All 148 fish were harvested from the Klutina River.

### ***Fishery Objectives and Management***

There are currently no specific management objectives for Dolly Varden. The underlying goal of ADF&G has been to assure sustained yield and provide fishing opportunity on fish resources. Harvest and catch of Dolly Varden in the UCUSMA is monitored through the SWHS.

### ***Current Issues and Fishery Outlook***

There is a lack of biological and stock data for UCUSMA Dolly Varden populations. It is suspected that both resident and anadromous populations exist within individual systems. However, one study in Klutina Lake to date failed to identify any anadromous individuals.

There have been no indications that the populations of Dolly Varden in the UCUSMA are declining. Declines in harvest appear to reflect a general decline in angler effort. The SWHS does not distinguish effort between individual species. Without a creel survey to assess the proportion of effort directed at individual species, the current effort data are only specific to

drainage or system trends. If fishing effort in the UCUSMA as a whole increases, it is anticipated that Dolly Varden harvest may also increase.

### ***Recent Board of Fisheries Action***

There were no proposals before the BOF in 2011 or 2014 specific to the Dolly Varden fisheries in the UCUSMA.

### ***Ongoing and Recommended Research and Management***

There is limited knowledge regarding the Dolly Varden populations in the UCUSMA. Prior to 2012, only 2 projects studied this species. A University of Alaska Fairbanks graduate study was conducted on the Tikel and Little Tonsina rivers in 1985 and 1986 (Gregory 1988). This study documented the biological characteristics of Tikel River Dolly Varden and compared these to the characteristics of a sample of Little Tonsina River Dolly Varden. A second graduate study collected aquatic habitat data on the Tikel River and identified habitat important to Dolly Varden (Martin 1988).

Since there is a lack of baseline data on Dolly Varden stocks, future research projects in the UCUSMA that may capture Dolly Varden should record biological data for incorporation into an area database. If creel surveys are conducted on the Klutina or Tonsina rivers for Chinook or sockeye salmon, otoliths should be collected from any Dolly Varden observed and sampled for evidence of strontium deposition levels consistent with anadromous movement. During the 2006 creel survey on the Klutina River, no Dolly Varden were reported harvested and thus no heads or otoliths were collected despite this being an objective of the project (Schwanke and Taras 2009).

In 2012, ADF&G collected 20 Dolly Varden from the Upper Klutina River and outlet of Klutina Lake during late October. Otoliths from all 20 fish were analyzed for strontium signatures (Zimmerman and Schwanke *In prep*). None of the fish was anadromous, but chemical signatures in the otoliths suggested the fish may migrate within the greater Copper River drainage or there may be large variance in strontium isotope concentrations within the Klutina River drainage. Further otolith analyses of Klutina River and other stocks and analysis of water chemistry from those systems will augment these findings.

## **UPPER COPPER / UPPER SUSITNA MANAGEMENT AREA STOCKED WATERS**

### ***Background and Historical Perspective***

ADF&G stocks 25 lakes in the UCUSMA providing fishing opportunities for popular fish species in locations where fishing opportunities are limited or didn't exist previously (Table 22). The lake stocking program serves a segment of the public who want to fish but must remain on or near the road system. All but 5 of the 25 stocked lakes are road-accessible or within 2 miles of a road and have trail access. This program provides increased fishing opportunities and offers a diversity of species in rural areas where minimal opportunity exists for sport fishing. It also diverts effort from wild populations in areas for which ADF&G has conservation concerns. Stocked lakes vary in size from 1.5 to 500 acres.

ADF&G stocks fingerling size fish (2–3 inches), subcatchable size fish (4–6 inches), and catchable size fish (7–9 inches) in area lakes, of which most are rainbow trout but other stocked species include Arctic grayling, Arctic char, coho salmon, and Chinook salmon. Most large lakes can produce sufficient numbers of catchable size fish from stockings of fingerling to meet angler demand. Smaller lakes or the more popular large lakes are stocked with subcatchable or

catchable size fish because stockings of fingerling cannot provide sufficient numbers of catchables to meet angler demand. In the few UCUSMA stocked lakes that may be prone to winterkill (low dissolved oxygen in late winter months), catchables are stocked to provide an immediate open water and early winter fishery.

### ***Recent Fishery Performance***

Effort on stocked waters peaked in the UCUSMA at 7,623 angler-days in 1992 (Somerville 2008). In 2014, angler effort on stocked waters was 1,380 angler-days, 63% of the recent 5-year average (2009–2013) of 2,193 angler days and the second lowest effort ever reported for UCUSMA stocked waters (Table 23).

Anglers harvested 746 stocked fish in 2014 and caught 3,211 stocked fish for a catch rate of 2.3 fish per angler-day (Table 23). The average catch per effort for the last 5 years has been 1.9 fish per day fished. The average harvest from 2009–2013 was 912 stocked fish.

Rainbow trout made up 88% of the harvest and 89% of the catch of stocked fish from 2009–2013 and accounted for 47% of the harvest and 60% of the catch in 2014. Arctic grayling, which were not stocked from 2004–2012, still composed 11% of the stocked lake harvest and catch from 2009–2013 and accounted for 53% of the harvest and 40% of the catch in 2014.

Silver Lake on the McCarthy Road and other stocked lakes in the Chitina area have been the most popular stocked lakes to fish in the UCUSMA since the early 1990s.

### ***Fishery Objectives and Management***

The *Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area Stocked Waters Management Plan* (5 AAC 52.065), requires ADF&G to manage stocked waters in the AYK Region to meet public demand for diverse fishing opportunities. Sport fishing effort and harvest are estimated through the Statewide Harvest Survey. All 25 stocked lakes in the UCUSMA are managed under the regional approach, with a bag and possession limit of 10 fish (all stocked species combined), only 1 fish 18 inches or larger.

### ***Current Issues and Fishery Outlook***

The outlook for UCUSMA stocked lakes is good, with consistent stocking of catchable rainbow trout, Arctic grayling, and Arctic char, and fingerling coho salmon and Arctic char. Harvest and angler effort have increased on previously popular lakes like Tolsona and Pippin Lakes, and Squirrel Creek Pit, which are again being stocked with catchable rainbow trout. Angler success should increase greatly over the next few years, which may lead to increased angler effort in all area lakes.

### ***Recent Board of Fisheries Action***

There were no changes to UCUSMA stocked lakes during the 2011 BOF cycle. At the 2014 meeting in Cordova, the BOF removed Kathleen, Little Crater, Little Junction, and Van lakes from the stocked waters of the UCUSMA. These lakes are either small with variable or low production, remote with too little effort to justify stocking or have seen almost no fishing effort over the last 10 years.

### ***Current or Recommended Research and Management Activities***

Population status of stocked species is assessed by periodic sampling or as a component of research projects. No other research is currently planned for UCUSMA stocked waters.

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## **TABLES**

Table 1.—Reported subsistence and personal use (Glennallen and Chitina Subdistricts) harvest of Chinook, sockeye, and coho salmon in the Copper River, 1995–2014.

| Year              | Harvest        |                |             |         |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|---------|
|                   | Chinook salmon | Sockeye salmon | Coho salmon | Total   |
| 1995              | 6,326          | 125,364        | 5,547       | 137,301 |
| 1996              | 4,881          | 141,337        | 3,817       | 150,354 |
| 1997              | 7,798          | 224,611        | 334         | 232,915 |
| 1998              | 8,334          | 195,567        | 2,607       | 206,660 |
| 1999              | 8,680          | 208,841        | 3,123       | 221,007 |
| 2000              | 7,789          | 161,510        | 4,051       | 173,739 |
| 2001              | 6,176          | 200,421        | 3,486       | 210,534 |
| 2002              | 5,766          | 132,164        | 2,317       | 140,602 |
| 2003              | 4,611          | 129,595        | 2,840       | 137,318 |
| 2004              | 5,917          | 164,231        | 3,015       | 173,589 |
| 2005              | 4,220          | 189,001        | 1,729       | 195,400 |
| 2006              | 4,958          | 173,292        | 2,144       | 180,994 |
| 2007              | 6,089          | 190,384        | 1,797       | 198,955 |
| 2008              | 4,655          | 122,937        | 3,058       | 131,107 |
| 2009              | 3,031          | 137,823        | 1,691       | 142,884 |
| 2010              | 2,862          | 197,443        | 1,980       | 202,829 |
| 2011              | 3,834          | 183,674        | 2,042       | 190,332 |
| 2012              | 2,794          | 193,196        | 1,561       | 197,984 |
| 2013              | 2,929          | 236,101        | 865         | 240,565 |
| 2014              | 2,238          | 226,464        | 1,171       | 230,238 |
| Average 2009–2013 | 3,090          | 189,647        | 1,628       | 194,919 |
| Average 2004–2013 | 4,129          | 178,808        | 1,988       | 185,464 |

*Note:* Starting with 2002, data include federal fishery harvests in the Glennallen and Chitina Subdistricts and Batzulnetas.

Table 2.–Commercial harvests of Chinook and sockeye salmon in the Copper River District, 1995–2013.

| Year              | Chinook salmon | Sockeye salmon |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1996              | 55,646         | 2,356,365      |
| 1997              | 51,273         | 2,955,431      |
| 1998              | 68,827         | 1,341,692      |
| 1999              | 62,337         | 1,682,559      |
| 2000              | 31,259         | 880,334        |
| 2001              | 39,524         | 1,323,577      |
| 2002              | 38,734         | 1,248,503      |
| 2003              | 47,721         | 1,188,052      |
| 2004              | 38,191         | 1,048,004      |
| 2005              | 34,624         | 1,331,664      |
| 2006              | 30,278         | 1,496,754      |
| 2007              | 39,095         | 1,901,773      |
| 2008              | 11,437         | 320,815        |
| 2009              | 9,457          | 896,469        |
| 2010              | 9,645          | 635,961        |
| 2011              | 18,500         | 2,052,432      |
| 2012              | 11,764         | 1,866,541      |
| 2013              | 8,826          | 1,608,117      |
| 2014              | 10,207         | 2,050,007      |
| 2015 <sup>a</sup> | 22,772         | 1,559,721      |
| Average 2010–2014 | 11,788         | 1,642,612      |
| Average 2005–2014 | 18,383         | 1,416,053      |

Source: Wiese et al. 2015.

<sup>a</sup> Data for 2015 are preliminary.

Table 3.–Sport fishing effort (angler-days) in the UCUSMA by drainage, 1995–2014.

| Year              | Gulkana River drainage |         |        | Upper Susitna drainage |         |        | Copper River |         |         |                     |                                    |               | Other sites |         |       | Area total |
|-------------------|------------------------|---------|--------|------------------------|---------|--------|--------------|---------|---------|---------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|---------|-------|------------|
|                   | Lakes                  | Streams | Total  | Lakes                  | Streams | Total  | Klutina      | Tazlina | Tonsina | Upstream of Gulkana | Downstream of Klutina <sup>a</sup> | Stocked lakes | Lakes       | Streams | Total |            |
| 1995              | 10,660                 | 33,415  | 44,075 | 17,080                 | 3,658   | 20,738 | 14,496       | 4,034   | 3,912   | 2,276               | 1,373                              | 5,441         | 3,482       | 3,124   | 6,606 | 102,951    |
| 1996              | 6,298                  | 25,727  | 32,025 | 8,749                  | 1,110   | 9,859  | 10,699       | 1,775   | 1,514   | 815                 | 695                                | 3,759         | 1,475       | 1,791   | 3,266 | 64,407     |
| 1997              | 5,343                  | 23,713  | 29,056 | 5,046                  | 949     | 5,995  | 11,644       | 1,489   | 1,099   | 457                 | 952                                | 2,160         | 1,517       | 1,888   | 3,405 | 56,257     |
| 1998              | 4,560                  | 27,349  | 31,909 | 5,135                  | 508     | 5,643  | 9,408        | 1,592   | 1,054   | 540                 | 795                                | 3,346         | 1,182       | 1,237   | 2,419 | 56,706     |
| 1999              | 7,933                  | 29,934  | 37,867 | 11,120                 | 883     | 12,003 | 15,687       | 1,617   | 1,230   | 1,184               | 388                                | 3,841         | 1,340       | 2,462   | 3,802 | 77,619     |
| 2000              | 4,825                  | 20,896  | 25,721 | 8,899                  | 1,747   | 10,646 | 11,125       | 1,583   | 1,182   | 459                 | 780                                | 3,689         | 1,717       | 1,292   | 3,009 | 58,194     |
| 2001              | 6,188                  | 18,664  | 24,852 | 4,829                  | 332     | 5,161  | 8,960        | 902     | 1,100   | 781                 | 484                                | 4,396         | 1,549       | 694     | 2,243 | 48,879     |
| 2002              | 5,910                  | 18,060  | 23,970 | 4,991                  | 531     | 5,522  | 9,111        | 751     | 1,381   | 675                 | 301                                | 2,377         | 945         | 1,580   | 2,525 | 46,613     |
| 2003              | 6,682                  | 19,164  | 25,846 | 7,934                  | 844     | 8,778  | 8,897        | 773     | 879     | 1,947               | 330                                | 2,858         | 1,382       | 449     | 1,831 | 52,139     |
| 2004              | 3,257                  | 17,351  | 20,608 | 6,037                  | 819     | 6,856  | 10,472       | 241     | 1,007   | 1,431               | 2,608                              | 1,406         | 1,611       | 318     | 1,929 | 46,558     |
| 2005              | 5,209                  | 15,277  | 20,486 | 3,723                  | 755     | 4,478  | 10,516       | 613     | 593     | 1,133               | 539                                | 2,313         | 721         | 293     | 1,014 | 41,685     |
| 2006              | 2,545                  | 11,910  | 14,455 | 4,032                  | 1,111   | 5,143  | 12,285       | 587     | 716     | 734                 | 855                                | 2,790         | 738         | 804     | 1,542 | 39,107     |
| 2007              | 3,297                  | 19,323  | 22,620 | 7,681                  | 521     | 8,202  | 16,512       | 593     | 562     | 1,180               | 578                                | 1,974         | 150         | 459     | 609   | 52,830     |
| 2008              | 4,099                  | 16,794  | 20,893 | 7,089                  | 1,383   | 8,472  | 12,677       | 641     | 653     | 1,216               | 1,349                              | 1,453         | 807         | 210     | 1,017 | 48,371     |
| 2009              | 4,373                  | 13,340  | 17,713 | 7,595                  | 1,250   | 8,845  | 15,665       | 802     | 645     | 1,653               | 508                                | 2,254         | 1,407       | 3,917   | 5,324 | 53,409     |
| 2010              | 2,880                  | 13,834  | 16,714 | 9,896                  | 1,424   | 11,320 | 16,534       | 1,540   | 725     | 1,726               | 974                                | 2,049         | 400         | 250     | 650   | 52,232     |
| 2011              | 2,407                  | 6,134   | 8,541  | 4,609                  | 1,423   | 6,032  | 9,915        | 1,366   | 535     | 408                 | 1,366                              | 3,117         | 233         | 480     | 713   | 31,993     |
| 2012              | 2,524                  | 5,593   | 8,117  | 6,625                  | 1,163   | 7,788  | 18,030       | 1,067   | 380     | 894                 | 628                                | 2,510         | 721         | 233     | 954   | 40,368     |
| 2013              | 2,658                  | 6,322   | 8,980  | 5,240                  | 1,758   | 6,998  | 16,357       | 1,331   | 898     | 1,589               | 1,717                              | 1,163         | 166         | 406     | 571   | 39,604     |
| 2014              | 2,972                  | 5,503   | 8,475  | 5,549                  | 639     | 6,188  | 17,276       | 741     | 436     | 332                 | 652                                | 1,331         | 139         | 283     | 422   | 35,853     |
| Average 2009–2013 | 2,968                  | 9,045   | 12,013 | 6,793                  | 1,404   | 8,197  | 15,300       | 1,221   | 637     | 1,254               | 1,039                              | 2,219         | 585         | 1,057   | 1,642 | 43,521     |
| Average 2004–2013 | 3,325                  | 12,588  | 15,913 | 6,264                  | 1,165   | 7,429  | 13,896       | 878     | 671     | 1,196               | 1,112                              | 2,103         | 695         | 737     | 1,432 | 44,631     |

<sup>a</sup> Copper River drainage streams and lakes below the confluence with the Klutina River and excluding the Tonsina River drainage.

Table 4.—Number of fish harvested, by species, by sport anglers fishing UCUSMA waters (including stocked waters), 1995–2014.

| Year                 | Chinook<br>salmon | Sockeye<br>salmon | Coho<br>salmon | Rainbow<br>trout<br>(wild) | Rainbow<br>trout<br>(stocked) | Dolly<br>Varden <sup>a</sup> | Lake<br>trout | Arctic<br>grayling <sup>a</sup> | Burbot | Whitefish | Landlocked<br>salmon <sup>a</sup> | Other<br>fish | Total<br>fish |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|--------|-----------|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1995                 | 6,709             | 6,068             | 202            | 419                        | 4,252                         | 1,695                        | 3,098         | 15,093                          | 995    | 898       | 42                                | 30            | 38,891        |
| 1996                 | 9,116             | 11,851            | 606            | 1,076                      | 4,000                         | 2,575                        | 2,713         | 11,260                          | 981    | 384       | 751                               | 0             | 44,866        |
| 1997                 | 8,346             | 12,293            | 370            | 1,135                      | 1,677                         | 1,092                        | 1,983         | 9,153                           | 1,358  | 134       | 331                               | 56            | 37,611        |
| 1998                 | 8,245             | 11,184            | 684            | 443                        | 4,739                         | 1,589                        | 1,818         | 8,498                           | 1,485  | 584       | 477                               | 0             | 39,590        |
| 1999                 | 6,742             | 11,101            | 256            | 798                        | 3,044                         | 2,390                        | 2,224         | 9,510                           | 1,861  | 317       | 232                               | 0             | 37,876        |
| 2000                 | 5,531             | 12,361            | 760            | 331                        | 2,546                         | 991                          | 1,709         | 7,111                           | 2,290  | 451       | 436                               | 22            | 34,510        |
| 2001                 | 4,904             | 8,169             | 374            | 452                        | 1,964                         | 1,612                        | 1,245         | 4,923                           | 1,506  | 1,135     | 282                               | 207           | 26,595        |
| 2002                 | 5,098             | 7,761             | 384            | 393                        | 2,901                         | 1,388                        | 2,215         | 9,849                           | 2,224  | 2,288     | 282                               | 54            | 34,837        |
| 2003                 | 5,717             | 7,108             | 277            | 1,335                      | 2,426                         | 1,578                        | 1,854         | 6,596                           | 1,457  | 422       | 51                                | 104           | 28,866        |
| 2004                 | 3,435             | 6,464             | 131            | 696                        | 1,615                         | 2,153                        | 2,044         | 4,177                           | 1,127  | 885       | 0                                 | 1,629         | 24,356        |
| 2005                 | 4,093             | 8,135             | 72             | 378                        | 1,440                         | 891                          | 2,354         | 3,899                           | 1,374  | 1,089     | 122                               | 16            | 23,863        |
| 2006                 | 3,425             | 14,297            | 54             | 486                        | 1,618                         | 777                          | 737           | 3,387                           | 575    | 662       | 42                                | 111           | 26,171        |
| 2007                 | 5,113             | 23,009            | 0              | 32                         | 573                           | 712                          | 964           | 2,766                           | 577    | 124       | 0                                 | 17            | 33,887        |
| 2008                 | 3,616             | 11,431            | 56             | 324                        | 694                           | 396                          | 1,470         | 4,231                           | 1,234  | 655       | 0                                 | 18            | 24,125        |
| 2009                 | 1,355             | 13,415            | 36             | 241                        | 1,013                         | 943                          | 1,875         | 4,480                           | 2,850  | 569       | 44                                | 81            | 26,902        |
| 2010                 | 2,416             | 14,743            | 90             | 158                        | 1006                          | 682                          | 1,631         | 4,723                           | 2,997  | 759       | 78                                | 0             | 29,283        |
| 2011                 | 1,753             | 7,727             | 21             | 262                        | 803                           | 231                          | 726           | 1,849                           | 556    | 298       | 10                                | 12            | 14,248        |
| 2012                 | 535               | 23,404            | 0              | 512                        | 936                           | 753                          | 676           | 4,091                           | 995    | 107       | 11                                | 0             | 32,020        |
| 2013                 | 285               | 26,711            | 0              | 129                        | 246                           | 1,036                        | 1,096         | 3,606                           | 1,576  | 586       | 0                                 | 21            | 35,292        |
| 2014                 | 931               | 18,005            | 89             | 240                        | 353                           | 148                          | 819           | 2,264                           | 458    | 597       | 0                                 | 0             | 23,904        |
| Average<br>2009–2013 | 1,269             | 17,200            | 29             | 260                        | 801                           | 729                          | 1,201         | 3,750                           | 1,795  | 464       | 29                                | 23            | 27,549        |
| Average<br>2004–2013 | 2,603             | 14,934            | 46             | 322                        | 994                           | 857                          | 1,357         | 3,721                           | 1,386  | 573       | 31                                | 191           | 27,015        |

<sup>a</sup> Includes fish harvested in stocked waters. Landlocked salmon include stocked Chinook and coho salmon.

Table 5.—Number of fish caught, by species, by sport anglers fishing UCUSMA waters, 1995–2014.

| Year                 | Chinook<br>salmon | Sockeye<br>salmon | Coho<br>salmon <sup>a</sup> | Steelhead<br>trout | Rainbow<br>trout<br>stocked | Rainbow<br>trout<br>wild | Dolly<br>Varden <sup>a</sup> | Lake<br>trout | Arctic<br>Grayling <sup>a</sup> | Burbot | Whitefish | Landlocked<br>salmon <sup>a</sup> | Other<br>fish | Total<br>fish |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|--------|-----------|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1995                 | 14,178            | 10,383            | 363                         | 51                 | 10,270                      | 6,709                    | 3,129                        | 10,937        | 71,189                          | 2,375  | 1,826     | 109                               | 70            | 131,589       |
| 1996                 | 27,195            | 25,265            | 1,195                       | 170                | 9,190                       | 10,745                   | 4,595                        | 11,209        | 83,611                          | 1,639  | 3,017     | 1,244                             | 6             | 179,081       |
| 1997                 | 27,699            | 26,724            | 748                         | 81                 | 4,525                       | 16,342                   | 3,439                        | 9,101         | 71,432                          | 2,646  | 1,075     | 1,095                             | 81            | 164,988       |
| 1998                 | 22,312            | 21,359            | 2,574                       | 192                | 11,224                      | 11,059                   | 4,156                        | 8,184         | 73,014                          | 2,849  | 1,612     | 1,708                             | 80            | 160,323       |
| 1999                 | 18,034            | 20,782            | 382                         | 276                | 4,505                       | 10,304                   | 6,993                        | 14,184        | 68,860                          | 3,173  | 907       | 309                               | 58            | 148,767       |
| 2000                 | 18,503            | 19,348            | 1,396                       | 334                | 8,038                       | 10,292                   | 3,332                        | 9,388         | 53,421                          | 4,316  | 2,019     | 800                               | 58            | 131,245       |
| 2001                 | 16,000            | 15,843            | 1,246                       | 234                | 13,204                      | 6,327                    | 6,188                        | 6,913         | 49,901                          | 2,527  | 3,069     | 513                               | 233           | 122,198       |
| 2002                 | 19,497            | 12,181            | 471                         | 129                | 6,870                       | 9,735                    | 4,714                        | 12,197        | 106,424                         | 3,878  | 3,756     | 927                               | 100           | 180,879       |
| 2003                 | 19,400            | 15,718            | 585                         | 112                | 4,777                       | 12,806                   | 3,720                        | 12,425        | 90,190                          | 2,496  | 2,338     | 169                               | 356           | 165,092       |
| 2004                 | 12,664            | 10,912            | 478                         | 64                 | 6,624                       | 6,212                    | 5,622                        | 8,212         | 51,219                          | 1,626  | 1,420     | 0                                 | 1,637         | 106,690       |
| 2005                 | 9,704             | 16,093            | 172                         | 64                 | 4,096                       | 6,858                    | 2,551                        | 11,057        | 50,760                          | 2,150  | 2,259     | 279                               | 32            | 106,075       |
| 2006                 | 10,971            | 21,778            | 72                          | 50                 | 4,125                       | 3,790                    | 2,189                        | 4,043         | 25,524                          | 1,054  | 1,023     | 42                                | 111           | 74,772        |
| 2007                 | 12,109            | 30,875            | 11                          | 99                 | 1,666                       | 4,253                    | 3,647                        | 6,125         | 29,815                          | 1,503  | 273       | 0                                 | 26            | 90,402        |
| 2008                 | 7,827             | 16,912            | 57                          | 61                 | 2,819                       | 7,414                    | 1,814                        | 9,140         | 47,718                          | 1,482  | 1,605     | 0                                 | 36            | 96,885        |
| 2009                 | 4,231             | 19,788            | 36                          | 20                 | 2,563                       | 4,607                    | 3,211                        | 12,843        | 76,559                          | 3,471  | 1,076     | 554                               | 81            | 129,040       |
| 2010                 | 8,213             | 19,489            | 114                         | 84                 | 5,044                       | 4,926                    | 1,089                        | 14,082        | 54,882                          | 5,897  | 1,994     | 282                               | 10            | 116,106       |
| 2011                 | 7,025             | 11,873            | 21                          | 0                  | 4,498                       | 3,794                    | 1,058                        | 3,846         | 19,738                          | 1,157  | 483       | 10                                | 23            | 53,526        |
| 2012                 | 1,869             | 30,336            | 0                           | 0                  | 5,155                       | 4,141                    | 1,712                        | 4,217         | 30,320                          | 1,853  | 373       | 66                                | 0             | 80,042        |
| 2013                 | 1,195             | 36,246            | 229                         | 58                 | 1,149                       | 4,826                    | 2,304                        | 8,218         | 29,991                          | 2,162  | 691       | 0                                 | 42            | 87,111        |
| 2014                 | 2,248             | 24,943            | 129                         | 0                  | 1,931                       | 3,405                    | 493                          | 4,491         | 26,163                          | 821    | 2,400     | 0                                 | 0             | 67,024        |
| Average<br>2009–2013 | 4,507             | 23,546            | 80                          | 32                 | 3,682                       | 4,459                    | 1,875                        | 8,641         | 42,298                          | 2,908  | 923       | 182                               | 31            | 93,165        |
| Average<br>2004–2013 | 7,581             | 21,430            | 119                         | 50                 | 3,774                       | 5,082                    | 2,520                        | 8,178         | 41,653                          | 2,236  | 1,120     | 123                               | 200           | 94,065        |

<sup>a</sup> Includes fish caught in stocked waters. Landlocked salmon includes stocked Chinook and coho salmon.



Table 6.—Summary of Chinook salmon harvests and upriver escapement in the Copper River 1995–2014.

| Year              | Commercial<br>harvest <sup>a</sup> | Copper River District<br>subsistence<br>harvest | Sport<br>harvest <sup>b</sup> | Glennallen<br>Subdistrict<br>harvest <sup>c</sup> | Chitina<br>Subdistrict<br>harvest <sup>c</sup> | Total<br>harvest | Upriver<br>return<br>estimate | Estimated<br>total<br>return | Upriver<br>escapement | Estimate<br>source |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|--|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1995              | 67,363                             | 154   | 6,709                         | 1,892   | 4,707  | 80,825           | ND                            | ND                           | ND                    | ND                 |
| 1996              | 57,815                             | 276   | 9,116                         | 1,482   | 3,584  | 72,273           | ND                            | ND                           | ND                    | ND                 |
| 1997              | 52,516                             | 200   | 8,346                         | 2,583   | 5,447  | 69,092           | ND                            | ND                           | ND                    | ND                 |
| 1998              | 70,238                             | 295   | 8,245                         | 1,842   | 6,723  | 87,343           | ND                            | ND                           | ND                    | ND                 |
| 1999              | 63,508                             | 353   | 6,742                         | 3,278   | 5,913  | 79,794           | 32,090                        | 95,951                       | 16,157                | ADF&G              |
| 2000              | 32,018                             | 689   | 5,531                         | 4,856   | 3,168  | 46,262           | 38,047                        | 70,754                       | 24,492                | ADF&G              |
| 2001              | 40,551                             | 826   | 4,904                         | 3,553   | 3,113  | 52,947           | 39,778                        | 81,155                       | 28,208                | ADF&G              |
| 2002              | 39,552                             | 549   | 5,098                         | 4,217   | 2,056  | 51,472           | 32,873                        | 72,974                       | 21,502                | ADF&G              |
| 2003              | 49,031                             | 710   | 5,717                         | 3,092   | 1,921  | 60,471           | 44,764                        | 94,505                       | 34,034                | NVE                |
| 2004              | 38,889                             | 1,106   | 3,435                         | 3,982   | 2,502  | 49,914           | 40,564                        | 80,559                       | 30,645                | NVE                |
| 2005              | 35,764                             | 260   | 4,093                         | 2,618   | 2,094  | 44,829           | 30,333                        | 66,357                       | 21,528                | NVE                |
| 2006              | 31,309                             | 779   | 3,425                         | 3,229   | 2,681  | 41,423           | 67,789                        | 99,877                       | 58,454                | NVE                |
| 2007              | 40,276                             | 1,145   | 5,113                         | 3,939   | 2,722  | 53,205           | 46,349                        | 87,770                       | 34,565                | NVE                |
| 2008              | 12,067                             | 470   | 3,616                         | 3,218   | 2,022  | 21,393           | 41,343                        | 53,880                       | 32,487                | NVE                |
| 2009              | 10,394                             | 212   | 1,355                         | 3,036   | 223  | 15,220           | 32,401                        | 43,007                       | 27,787                | NVE                |
| 2010              | 10,582                             | 276   | 2,416                         | 2,425   | 718  | 16,410           | 22,323                        | 33,181                       | 16,771                | NVE                |
| 2011              | 19,788                             | 212   | 1,753                         | 3,062   | 1,080  | 25,895           | 33,889                        | 53,889                       | 27,994                | NVE                |
| 2012              | 12,623                             | 237   | 535                           | 2,510   | 572  | 16,401           | 31,452                        | 44,312                       | 27,911                | NVE                |
| 2013              | 9,445                              | 854   | 285                           | 2,522   | 762  | 13,868           | 32,581                        | 42,880                       | 29,012                | NVE                |
| 2014              | 11,011                             | 153   | 931                           | 1,785   | 733  | 14,613           | 24,158                        | 35,322                       | 20,709                | NVE                |
| Average 2009–2013 | 12,566                             | 358   | 1,269                         | 2,711   | 671  | 17,575           | 30,529                        | 43,454                       | 25,878                |                    |
| Average 2004–2013 | 22,114                             | 555   | 2,603                         | 3,054   | 1,538  | 29,863           | 37,902                        | 60,571                       | 30,708                |                    |

Note: ND = No data; ADF&G = Alaska Department of Fish and Game; NVE = Native Village of Eyak.

<sup>a</sup> Includes commercial personal use, educational, and donated harvests from the Copper River District.

<sup>b</sup> Includes sport harvest from Copper River District and delta and Upper Copper River.

<sup>c</sup> These data are expanded to reflect unreported permits and include reported federal subsistence harvest figures from 2002 to 2004 and expanded federal subsistence harvest beginning with 2005. See Table 1 for reported harvests.

Table 7.–Harvest of Chinook salmon by sport anglers fishing in the UCUSMA by drainage, 1995–2014.

| Year              | Gulkana River Drainage |             |             |       | Klutina River drainage | Tonsina River drainage | Tazlina River drainage | Copper River        |                       | Other waters | Area total |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|------------|
|                   | Upper river            | Lower river | Unspecified | Total |                        |                        |                        | Upstream of Gulkana | Downstream of Klutina |              |            |
| 1995              | 984                    | 2,250       | 322         | 3,556 | 2,485                  | 539                    | 0                      | 0                   | 0                     | 129          | 6,709      |
| 1996              | 1,165                  | 3,362       | 733         | 5,260 | 3,142                  | 331                    | 64                     | 0                   | 64                    | 255          | 9,116      |
| 1997              | 1,872                  | 2,514       | 355         | 4,741 | 3,344                  | 131                    | 28                     | 0                   | 22                    | 80           | 8,346      |
| 1998              | 885                    | 3,786       | 732         | 5,403 | 2,608                  | 39                     | 63                     | 0                   | 15                    | 117          | 8,245      |
| 1999              | 845                    | 1,764       | 484         | 3,093 | 3,489                  | 0                      | 0                      | 25                  | 11                    | 124          | 6,742      |
| 2000              | 1,318                  | 2,304       | 555         | 4,177 | 1,303                  | 0                      | 0                      | 0                   | 10                    | 41           | 5,531      |
| 2001              | 967                    | 1,793       | 514         | 3,274 | 1,465                  | 11                     | 0                      | 0                   | 32                    | 122          | 4,904      |
| 2002              | 715                    | 2,125       | 143         | 2,983 | 1,778                  | 230                    | 0                      | 13                  | 0                     | 94           | 5,098      |
| 2003              | 1,427                  | 2,164       | 116         | 3,707 | 1,873                  | 25                     | 0                      | 0                   | 12                    | 100          | 5,717      |
| 2004              | 64                     | 1,670       | 156         | 1,890 | 1,338                  | 115                    | 0                      | 0                   | 39                    | 53           | 3,435      |
| 2005              | 392                    | 2,081       | 100         | 2,573 | 1,276                  | 214                    | 0                      | 0                   | 15                    | 15           | 4,093      |
| 2006              | 464                    | 1,495       | 188         | 2,147 | 1,136                  | 100                    | 0                      | 0                   | 13                    | 29           | 3,425      |
| 2007              | 467                    | 2,639       | 163         | 3,269 | 1,683                  | 0                      | 0                      | 0                   | 113                   | 48           | 5,113      |
| 2008              | 241                    | 2,036       | 46          | 2,323 | 1,160                  | 0                      | 0                      | 0                   | 118                   | 15           | 3,616      |
| 2009              | 62                     | 454         | 0           | 516   | 733                    | 58                     | 0                      | 0                   | 48                    | 0            | 1,355      |
| 2010              | 401                    | 1,038       | 13          | 1,452 | 863                    | 0                      | 0                      | 0                   | 101                   | 0            | 2,416      |
| 2011              | 0                      | 536         | 27          | 563   | 1,043                  | 0                      | 0                      | 0                   | 107                   | 40           | 1,753      |
| 2012              | 14                     | 106         | 76          | 196   | 314                    | 0                      | 0                      | 0                   | 25                    | 0            | 535        |
| 2013              | 0                      | 0           | 0           | 0     | 223                    | 51                     | 0                      | 0                   | 0                     | 11           | 285        |
| 2014              | 16                     | 431         | 0           | 447   | 414                    | 16                     | 0                      | 0                   | 54                    | 0            | 931        |
| Average 2009–2013 | 95                     | 427         | 23          | 545   | 635                    | 22                     | 0                      | 0                   | 56                    | 10           | 1,269      |
| Average 2004–2013 | 211                    | 1,206       | 77          | 1,493 | 977                    | 54                     | 0                      | 0                   | 58                    | 21           | 2,603      |

Table 8.—Harvest summary data for guided anglers in the Upper Copper River drainage, 2007–2014.

| Site                                | Year | Guides | Clients | Trips | Chinook<br>salmon | Sockeye<br>salmon | Coho<br>salmon | Dolly<br>Varden | Arctic grayling | Rainbow<br>trout | Lake<br>trout |
|-------------------------------------|------|--------|---------|-------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|
| Gulkana River drainage <sup>a</sup> | 2007 | 28     | 1,251   | 364   | 754               | 64                | 0              | 0               | 7               | 0                | 10            |
| Gulkana River drainage <sup>a</sup> | 2008 | 29     | 1,001   | 284   | 504               | 11                | 0              | 1               | 8               | 0                | 2             |
| Gulkana River drainage <sup>a</sup> | 2009 | 19     | 364     | 109   | 147               | 33                | 0              | 0               | 0               | 0                | 6             |
| Gulkana River drainage <sup>a</sup> | 2010 | 18     | 452     | 139   | 197               | 14                | 0              | 0               | 0               | 0                | 0             |
| Gulkana River drainage <sup>a</sup> | 2011 | 19     | 463     | 144   | 192               | 33                | 0              | 0               | 15              | 0                | 0             |
| Gulkana River drainage <sup>a</sup> | 2012 | 8      | 314     | 86    | 58                | 136               | 0              | 0               | 1               | 0                | 0             |
| Gulkana River drainage <sup>a</sup> | 2013 | 9      | 163     | 50    | 0                 | 93                | 0              | 0               | 8               | 0                | 4             |
| Gulkana River drainage <sup>a</sup> | 2014 | 10     | 140     | 43    | 30                | 27                | 0              | 0               | 8               | 0                | 0             |
| Klutina River drainage <sup>b</sup> | 2007 | 28     | 1,657   | 500   | 904               | 967               | 0              | 161             | 39              | 2                | 2             |
| Klutina River drainage <sup>b</sup> | 2008 | 22     | 1,571   | 470   | 688               | 266               | 4              | 84              | 21              | 4                | 0             |
| Klutina River drainage <sup>b</sup> | 2009 | 28     | 1,203   | 359   | 374               | 540               | 5              | 225             | 31              | 3                | 0             |
| Klutina River drainage <sup>b</sup> | 2010 | 25     | 1,286   | 407   | 563               | 356               | 0              | 184             | 6               | 1                | 0             |
| Klutina River drainage <sup>b</sup> | 2011 | 19     | 953     | 307   | 387               | 189               | 0              | 93              | 2               | 3                | 0             |
| Klutina River drainage <sup>b</sup> | 2012 | 18     | 979     | 281   | 237               | 757               | 0              | 28              | 22              | 3                | 0             |
| Klutina River drainage <sup>b</sup> | 2013 | 23     | 1,046   | 298   | 131               | 1,635             | 0              | 37              | 0               | 0                | 0             |
| Klutina River drainage <sup>b</sup> | 2014 | 13     | 673     | 201   | 163               | 405               | 0              | 61              | 1               | 0                | 0             |

*Note:* Harvest data is total harvest and may exceed the harvest reported by area and site in Sigurdsson and Powers 2009–2014, where harvest cannot be reported for sites or drainages with 3 or fewer guides reporting in a given year.

<sup>a</sup> Includes all sections of the Gulkana River, Crosswind Lake, Paxson Lake, and Mud Lake.

<sup>b</sup> Includes Klutina River and Klutina Lake.

Table 9.–Catch of Chinook salmon by sport anglers fishing in the UCUSMA by drainage, 1995–2014.

| Year              | Gulkana River |             |             |        | Klutina River drainage | Tonsina River drainage | Tazlina River drainage | Copper River        |                       | Other waters | Area total |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|--------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|------------|
|                   | Upper river   | Lower river | Unspecified | Total  |                        |                        |                        | Upstream of Gulkana | Downstream of Klutina |              |            |
| 1995              | 2,963         | 4,839       | 46          | 7,848  | 5,081                  | 1,102                  | 0                      | 0                   | 9                     | 138          | 14,178     |
| 1996              | 3,472         | 11,836      | 2,507       | 17,815 | 7,407                  | 832                    | 74                     | 0                   | 246                   | 821          | 27,195     |
| 1997              | 9,658         | 7,385       | 1,080       | 18,123 | 8,677                  | 395                    | 94                     | 0                   | 22                    | 449          | 27,760     |
| 1998              | 2,335         | 11,115      | 2,003       | 15,453 | 5,815                  | 193                    | 101                    | 419                 | 60                    | 283          | 22,324     |
| 1999              | 3,221         | 4,876       | 937         | 9,034  | 8,637                  | 0                      | 104                    | 50                  | 22                    | 187          | 18,034     |
| 2000              | 4,890         | 7,650       | 1,379       | 13,919 | 4,057                  | 292                    | 0                      | 178                 | 16                    | 41           | 18,503     |
| 2001              | 2,947         | 6,417       | 1,470       | 10,834 | 4,922                  | 21                     | 0                      | 53                  | 158                   | 12           | 16,000     |
| 2002              | 3,346         | 8,613       | 357         | 12,316 | 5,645                  | 861                    | 0                      | 13                  | 471                   | 191          | 19,497     |
| 2003              | 4,165         | 8,898       | 293         | 13,356 | 5,418                  | 290                    | 0                      | 202                 | 25                    | 135          | 19,426     |
| 2004              | 1,380         | 5,433       | 555         | 7,368  | 4,135                  | 521                    | 0                      | 404                 | 173                   | 63           | 12,664     |
| 2005              | 1,670         | 4,697       | 217         | 6,584  | 2,651                  | 483                    | 0                      | 0                   | 45                    | 15           | 9,778      |
| 2006              | 1,805         | 5,664       | 204         | 7,673  | 2,890                  | 367                    | 0                      | 0                   | 13                    | 114          | 11,057     |
| 2007              | 1,203         | 7,254       | 163         | 8,620  | 3,025                  | 31                     | 62                     | 16                  | 275                   | 80           | 12,109     |
| 2008              | 549           | 5,389       | 46          | 5,984  | 1,670                  | 15                     | 11                     | 0                   | 132                   | 15           | 7,827      |
| 2009              | 616           | 1,469       | 0           | 2,085  | 1,888                  | 79                     | 0                      | 15                  | 164                   | 0            | 4,231      |
| 2010              | 982           | 3,719       | 39          | 4,740  | 3,240                  | 39                     | 13                     | 0                   | 181                   | 0            | 8,213      |
| 2011              | 64            | 2,372       | 161         | 2,597  | 3,476                  | 72                     | 17                     | 0                   | 802                   | 61           | 7,025      |
| 2012              | 177           | 495         | 13          | 685    | 1,118                  | 41                     | 0                      | 0                   | 25                    | 0            | 1,869      |
| 2013              | 0             | 327         | 0           | 327    | 560                    | 285                    | 0                      | 0                   | 0                     | 23           | 1,195      |
| 2014              | 34            | 1,000       | 0           | 1,034  | 955                    | 130                    | 0                      | 0                   | 129                   | 23           | 2,248      |
| Average 2009–2013 | 368           | 1,676       | 43          | 2,087  | 2,056                  | 103                    | 6                      | 3                   | 234                   | 17           | 4,507      |
| Average 2004–2013 | 829           | 3,682       | 140         | 4,650  | 2,465                  | 193                    | 10                     | 44                  | 181                   | 37           | 7,581      |

Table 10.—Harvest of sockeye salmon by sport anglers fishing UCUSMA drainages, 1995–2014.

| Year              | Gulkana River drainage |             |             |       | Klutina River drainage | Tonsina River drainage | Tazlina River drainage | Copper River        |                       | Other waters | Area total |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|------------|
|                   | Upper river            | Lower river | Unspecified | Total |                        |                        |                        | Upstream of Gulkana | Downstream of Klutina |              |            |
| 1995              | 978                    | 920         | 511         | 2,409 | 2,549                  | 105                    | 0                      | 115                 | 284                   | 606          | 6,068      |
| 1996              | 1,828                  | 4,673       | 917         | 7,418 | 4,215                  | 42                     | 25                     | 0                   | 17                    | 134          | 11,851     |
| 1997              | 1,585                  | 2,469       | 512         | 4,566 | 6,501                  | 39                     | 0                      | 21                  | 201                   | 965          | 12,293     |
| 1998              | 1,591                  | 3,460       | 1,319       | 6,370 | 4,264                  | 68                     | 58                     | 0                   | 11                    | 413          | 11,184     |
| 1999              | 1,349                  | 2,142       | 701         | 4,192 | 6,514                  | 0                      | 30                     | 32                  | 65                    | 268          | 11,101     |
| 2000              | 1,162                  | 1,194       | 1,951       | 4,307 | 7,219                  | 0                      | 35                     | 141                 | 317                   | 342          | 12,361     |
| 2001              | 524                    | 852         | 432         | 1,808 | 5,834                  | 0                      | 0                      | 0                   | 193                   | 334          | 8,169      |
| 2002              | 833                    | 1,680       | 32          | 2,545 | 4,704                  | 96                     | 0                      | 0                   | 13                    | 403          | 7,761      |
| 2003              | 550                    | 843         | 72          | 1,465 | 5,321                  | 21                     | 0                      | 11                  | 203                   | 87           | 7,108      |
| 2004              | 177                    | 776         | 23          | 976   | 5,069                  | 142                    | 0                      | 11                  | 0                     | 266          | 6,464      |
| 2005              | 157                    | 939         | 73          | 1,169 | 6,646                  | 0                      | 0                      | 0                   | 180                   | 140          | 8,135      |
| 2006              | 230                    | 693         | 0           | 923   | 13,222                 | 0                      | 0                      | 0                   | 130                   | 22           | 14,297     |
| 2007              | 114                    | 1,306       | 38          | 1,458 | 21,255                 | 25                     | 0                      | 0                   | 290                   | 0            | 23,028     |
| 2008              | 369                    | 206         | 0           | 575   | 10,107                 | 0                      | 0                      | 0                   | 749                   | 0            | 11,431     |
| 2009              | 362                    | 886         | 87          | 1,335 | 11,759                 | 0                      | 51                     | 0                   | 270                   | 0            | 13,415     |
| 2010              | 160                    | 1,316       | 0           | 1,476 | 12,238                 | 156                    | 0                      | 0                   | 708                   | 165          | 14,743     |
| 2011              | 0                      | 684         | 101         | 785   | 6,025                  | 0                      | 46                     | 0                   | 871                   | 0            | 7,727      |
| 2012              | 0                      | 1,528       | 0           | 1,528 | 21,564                 | 0                      | 0                      | 0                   | 301                   | 0            | 23,393     |
| 2013              | 25                     | 1,973       | 0           | 1,978 | 23,721                 | 0                      | 97                     | 0                   | 787                   | 129          | 26,711     |
| 2014              | 0                      | 586         | 123         | 709   | 17,004                 | 0                      | 0                      | 0                   | 292                   | 0            | 18,005     |
| Average 2009–2013 | 109                    | 1,273       | 40          | 1,423 | 15,061                 | 31                     | 39                     | 0                   | 587                   | 59           | 17,200     |
| Average 2004–2013 | 159                    | 1,028       | 33          | 1,221 | 13,159                 | 32                     | 19                     | 1                   | 429                   | 72           | 14,934     |

Table 11.—Summary of sockeye harvests and upriver escapement in the Copper River 1995–2014.

| Year              | Commercial<br>harvest <sup>a</sup> | CRD<br>subsistence<br>harvest <sup>b</sup> | Sport<br>harvest <sup>c</sup> | Glennallen<br>Subdistrict<br>harvest <sup>d</sup> | Chitina<br>Subdistrict<br>harvest <sup>d</sup> | Total<br>harvest | Upriver return<br>estimate <sup>e</sup> | Estimated total<br>return | Spawning<br>escapement <sup>f</sup> |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|---|--|------------------|---|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1995              | 1,271,822                          | 692  | 6,658                         | 52,516  | 79,006   | 1,410,694        | 547,565                                 | 1,820,079                 | 379,329                             |
| 1996              | 2,356,365                          | 969  | 14,086                        | 52,052  | 95,007   | 2,518,479        | 852,125                                 | 3,209,459                 | 569,212                             |
| 1997              | 2,955,431                          | 1,001                                      | 13,265                        | 82,807  | 148,727  | 3,201,231        | 1,107,156                               | 4,063,588                 | 797,882                             |
| 1998              | 1,343,127                          | 850  | 13,199                        | 64,463  | 137,161  | 1,558,800        | 820,554                                 | 2,341,546                 | 485,541                             |
| 1999              | 1,683,892                          | 1,330                                      | 13,956                        | 77,369  | 141,658  | 1,918,205        | 818,507                                 | 2,708,888                 | 457,589                             |
| 2000              | 881,419                            | 4,360                                      | 14,550                        | 59,497  | 107,856  | 1,067,682        | 598,790                                 | 1,633,508                 | 345,961                             |
| 2001              | 1,325,690                          | 3,072                                      | 8,467                         | 83,787  | 132,108  | 1,553,124        | 838,427                                 | 2,237,918                 | 533,816                             |
| 2002              | 1,249,920                          | 3,067                                      | 8,559                         | 58,800  | 86,543   | 1,406,889        | 797,390                                 | 2,192,176                 | 583,824                             |
| 2003              | 1,192,164                          | 1,607                                      | 7,739                         | 60,623  | 81,513   | 1,343,646        | 702,327                                 | 2,043,029                 | 507,958                             |
| 2004              | 1,048,603                          | 1,822                                      | 7,416                         | 73,214  | 108,527  | 1,239,582        | 643,539                                 | 1,833,686                 | 448,457                             |
| 2005              | 1,333,574                          | 939  | 8,791                         | 86,140  | 122,463  | 1,551,907        | 824,792                                 | 2,276,773                 | 516,996                             |
| 2006              | 1,498,423                          | 4,505                                      | 14,410                        | 76,056  | 124,810  | 1,718,204        | 891,917                                 | 2,592,750                 | 580,202                             |
| 2007              | 1,903,858                          | 6,184                                      | 24,732                        | 83,338  | 126,154  | 2,144,266        | 873,252                                 | 2,961,568                 | 613,129                             |
| 2008              | 323,096                            | 4,001                                      | 12,656                        | 57,632  | 82,318   | 479,703          | 677,001                                 | 1,141,223                 | 477,952                             |
| 2009              | 902,940                            | 1,810                                      | 14,429                        | 60,517  | 90,917   | 1,070,613        | 677,347                                 | 1,721,695                 | 469,089                             |
| 2010              | 643,086                            | 2,016                                      | 16,057                        | 84,856  | 140,811  | 886,826          | 901,488                                 | 1,715,714                 | 502,992                             |
| 2011              | 2,061,525                          | 1,818                                      | 8,565                         | 75,375  | 129,985  | 2,277,268        | 880,342                                 | 3,097,537                 | 607,657                             |
| 2012              | 1,874,726                          | 4,334                                      | 24,618                        | 92,792  | 128,058  | 2,124,528        | 1,239,902                               | 3,253,887                 | 930,210                             |
| 2013              | 1,617,717                          | 5,741                                      | 27,773                        | 90,788  | 182,915  | 1,924,934        | 1,234,479                               | 3,006,009                 | 860,829                             |
| 2014              | 2,062,265                          | 1,751                                      | 18,696                        | 98,535  | 158,879  | 2,340,126        | 1,194,260                               | 3,411,981                 | 864,988                             |
| Average 2009–2013 | 1,419,999                          | 3,144                                      | 18,291                        | 80,866  | 134,537  | 1,656,836        | 986,712                                 | 2,558,968                 | 674,253                             |
| Average 2004–2013 | 1,320,755                          | 3,317                                      | 15,944                        | 78,071  | 123,969  | 1,541,718        | 884,406                                 | 2,360,084                 | 600,765                             |

<sup>a</sup> Includes commercial harvest plus homepack, donated and educational harvests.

<sup>b</sup> Includes state and federal subsistence harvests in the Copper River District.

<sup>c</sup> Includes sport harvest in the Copper River Delta and the Upper Copper River upstream of Haley Creek

<sup>d</sup> These data are expanded to reflect unreported state harvest and include reported federal harvest (2002–2004) and expanded federal harvest beginning in 2005.

<sup>e</sup> Prior to 1999 is the Miles Lake sonar count minus the proportion of Chinook salmon in the Glennallen and Chitina subdistrict fisheries. Starting in 1999, this includes the Miles Lake sonar count minus the Chinook salmon mark-recapture point estimate

<sup>f</sup> Upriver return escapement minus upriver sockeye harvests.

Table 12.—Distribution of sockeye salmon in major drainages in the Copper River, 2005–2009.

| Year              | Percentage of total Copper River escapement by river system |               |               |               |               |               |                    |
|-------------------|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|
|                   | Lower Copper River  | Chitina River | Tonsina River | Klutina River | Tazlina River | Gulkana River | Upper Copper River |
| 2005              | 7.4   | 5.0           | 4.7           | 35.1          | 12.4          | 7.0           | 28.4               |
| 2006              | 5.8   | 8.1           | 5.5           | 44.5          | 11.4          | 15.6          | 9.1                |
| 2007              | 9.1   | 5.4           | 5.1           | 54.2          | 9.8           | 9.4           | 7.1                |
| 2008              | 8.2   | 8.2           | 1.7           | 33.7          | 18.6          | 19.2          | 10.3               |
| 2009              | 12.4  | 5.0           | 2.7           | 33.2          | 5.7           | 16.4          | 24.5               |
| Average 2005–2009 | 6.8   | 6.3           | 3.9           | 40.1          | 11.6          | 13.5          | 15.9               |

Source: (Smith et al. 2004; Wade et al. 2007; Wade et al. 2009; Wade et al. 2010).

Table 13.—Number of permits issued and expanded salmon harvests during the Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence salmon fishery in the Copper River, 1995–2014 (does not include federal subsistence fishery permit numbers or harvests).

| Year              | Number of permits issued | Estimated salmon harvest |         |       |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------|-------|--------------------|
|                   |                          | Chinook                  | Sockeye | Coho  | Total <sup>a</sup> |
| 1995              | 858                      | 1,892                    | 52,516  | 882   | 55,323             |
| 1996              | 850                      | 1,482                    | 52,052  | 557   | 54,290             |
| 1997              | 1,133                    | 2,583                    | 82,807  | 187   | 85,743             |
| 1998              | 1,010                    | 1,842                    | 64,463  | 533   | 66,951             |
| 1999              | 1,101                    | 3,278                    | 77,369  | 1,121 | 82,119             |
| 2000              | 1,251                    | 4,856                    | 59,497  | 532   | 64,885             |
| 2001              | 1,239                    | 3,553                    | 83,787  | 1,144 | 88,568             |
| 2002              | 1,121                    | 3,653                    | 50,850  | 530   | 55,058             |
| 2003              | 1,012                    | 2,538                    | 47,007  | 467   | 50,055             |
| 2004              | 956                      | 3,346                    | 55,510  | 577   | 59,497             |
| 2005              | 961                      | 2,229                    | 64,213  | 154   | 66,615             |
| 2006              | 984                      | 2,769                    | 57,710  | 212   | 60,774             |
| 2007              | 1,174                    | 3,276                    | 65,714  | 238   | 69,284             |
| 2008              | 1,186                    | 2,381                    | 43,157  | 493   | 46,106             |
| 2009              | 1,090                    | 2,493                    | 46,849  | 228   | 49,643             |
| 2010              | 1,321                    | 2,099                    | 70,719  | 293   | 73,260             |
| 2011              | 1,306                    | 2,319                    | 59,622  | 372   | 62,477             |
| 2012              | 1,527                    | 2,095                    | 76,305  | 335   | 78,851             |
| 2013              | 1,339                    | 2,148                    | 73,728  | 143   | 76,044             |
| 2014              | 1,656                    | 1,365                    | 75,501  | 233   | 77,131             |
| Average 2009–2013 | 1,317                    | 2,231                    | 65,445  | 274   | 68,055             |
| Average 2004–2013 | 1,184                    | 2,516                    | 61,353  | 305   | 64,255             |

<sup>a</sup> Total harvest includes steelhead and other species.

Table 14.—Number of permits issued and expanded salmon harvested during the Chitina Subdistrict personal use salmon fishery in the Copper River, 1995–2014 (does not include federal subsistence fishery permit numbers or harvests).

| Year              | Number of permits issued | Estimated salmon harvest |         |       |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------|-------|--------------------|
|                   |                          | Chinook                  | Sockeye | Coho  | Total <sup>a</sup> |
| 1995              | 6,760                    | 4,707                    | 79,006  | 4,870 | 88,617             |
| 1996              | 7,198                    | 3,584                    | 95,007  | 3,381 | 102,108            |
| 1997              | 9,086                    | 5,447                    | 148,727 | 160   | 154,349            |
| 1998              | 10,006                   | 6,723                    | 137,161 | 2,145 | 146,075            |
| 1999              | 9,943                    | 5,913                    | 141,658 | 2,128 | 149,733            |
| 2000 <sup>b</sup> | 8,151                    | 3,168                    | 107,856 | 3,657 | 114,884            |
| 2001 <sup>b</sup> | 9,458                    | 3,113                    | 132,108 | 2,720 | 138,425            |
| 2002 <sup>b</sup> | 6,804                    | 2,023                    | 85,968  | 1,934 | 90,242             |
| 2003              | 6,441                    | 1,903                    | 80,796  | 2,533 | 85,496             |
| 2004              | 8,156                    | 2,495                    | 107,312 | 2,860 | 113,176            |
| 2005              | 8,230                    | 2,043                    | 120,013 | 1,869 | 124,403            |
| 2006              | 8,497                    | 2,663                    | 123,261 | 2,715 | 129,103            |
| 2007              | 8,377                    | 2,694                    | 125,126 | 1,742 | 130,222            |
| 2008              | 8,041                    | 1,999                    | 81,359  | 2,711 | 86,476             |
| 2009              | 7,958                    | 214                      | 90,035  | 1,712 | 92,228             |
| 2010              | 9,970                    | 700                      | 138,487 | 2,013 | 141,565            |
| 2011              | 9,217                    | 1,067                    | 128,052 | 1,702 | 131,265            |
| 2012              | 10,016                   | 567                      | 127,143 | 1,385 | 129,362            |
| 2013              | 10,592                   | 744                      | 180,663 | 797   | 182,904            |
| 2014              | 11,717                   | 719                      | 157,215 | 1,129 | 159,392            |
| Average 2009–2013 | 9,551                    | 658                      | 132,876 | 1,522 | 135,465            |
| Average 2004–2013 | 8,905                    | 1,519                    | 122,145 | 1,951 | 126,070            |

<sup>a</sup> Total expanded, includes unidentified salmon.

<sup>b</sup> From 2000 to 2002 the Chitina Subdistrict was classified a subsistence fishery.



Table 15.—Number of freshwater finfish subsistence permits issued and harvest from UCUSMA waters, 1995–2014.

| Year              | Permits      |              |                        |                     | Harvest <sup>a,b</sup> |            |        |       |       |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------|--------|-------|-------|
|                   | Total Issued | Total fished | Water bodies permitted | Water bodies fished | Whitefish              | Lake Trout | Burbot | Other | Total |
| 1995              | 6            | 6            | 5                      | 5                   | 2,964                  | 2          | 5      | 5     | 2,976 |
| 1996              | 8            | 6            | 6                      | 5                   | 2,104                  | 0          | 3      | 47    | 2,154 |
| 1997              | 10           | 5            | 7                      | 6                   | 1,380                  | 0          | 0      | 65    | 1,445 |
| 1998              | 6            | 6            | 4                      | 4                   | 2,032                  | 1          | 0      | 7     | 2,040 |
| 1999              | 9            | 8            | 6                      | 5                   | 1,382                  | 1          | 0      | 3     | 1,386 |
| 2000              | 9            | 8            | 6                      | 6                   | 1,974                  | 4          | 0      | 9     | 1,987 |
| 2001              | 8            | 7            | 5                      | 5                   | 1,670                  | 2          | 2      | 36    | 1,710 |
| 2002              | 12           | 7            | 5                      | 3                   | 1,321                  | 4          | 1      | 1     | 1,327 |
| 2003              | 13           | 7            | 6                      | 3                   | 1,143                  | 2          | 8      | 13    | 1,166 |
| 2004              | 11           | 9            | 5                      | 4                   | 2,125                  | 15         | 0      | 25    | 2,165 |
| 2005              | 17           | 13           | 7                      | 5                   | 1,643                  | 13         | 1      | 19    | 1,676 |
| 2006              | 13           | 10           | 6                      | 4                   | 1,070                  | 6          | 3      | 2     | 1,081 |
| 2007              | 18           | 12           | 5                      | 3                   | 3,094                  | 6          | 3      | 6     | 3,109 |
| 2008              | 16           | 10           | 3                      | 2                   | 585                    | 9          | 2      | 1     | 597   |
| 2009              | 28           | 16           | 5                      | 3                   | 2,708                  | 28         | 21     | 11    | 2,768 |
| 2010              | 27           | 19           | 7                      | 4                   | 2,088                  | 33         | 13     | 13    | 2,147 |
| 2011              | 25           | 20           | 5                      | 5                   | 981                    | 17         | 1      | 0     | 999   |
| 2012              | 15           | 10           | 2                      | 2                   | 648                    | 8          | 0      | 0     | 656   |
| 2013              | 25           | 19           | 6                      | 6                   | 1,259                  | 10         | 0      | 18    | 1,287 |
| 2014              | 19           | 12           | 6                      | 3                   | 697                    | 19         | 0      | 20    | 736   |
| Average 2009–2013 | 24           | 17           | 5                      | 4                   | 1,537                  | 19         | 7      | 8     | 1,571 |
| Average 2004–2013 | 20           | 14           | 5                      | 4                   | 1,620                  | 15         | 4      | 10    | 1,649 |

<sup>a</sup> Reported harvest is from set gillnets with the following exceptions: 202 whitefish (WF) were harvested with a seine in 2000, 5 WF and 5 burbot (BB) in 2003 and 52 WF in 2006 with fyke nets, and 12 WF and 1 BB by spear in 2011.

<sup>b</sup> Retention of species other than whitefish or longnose suckers taken with gillnets was prohibited by permit stipulation beginning in 2011 and permittees were required to provide 24 hour notice prior to setting subsistence gear. Other species listed as harvested after 2010 were not retained and were released either dead or alive.

Table 16.—Harvest of wild Arctic grayling by sport anglers in the UCUSMA by drainage, 1995–2014.

| Year              | Gulkana River drainage | Upper Susitna River drainage | Klutina River drainage | Tonsina River drainage | Tazlina River drainage |                         | Copper River drainage |               | Other lakes and streams | Area total |
|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------------|------------|
|                   |                        |                              |                        |                        | Mendeltna Creek        | Other lakes and streams | Above Gulkana         | Below Klutina |                         |            |
| 1995              | 4,159                  | 3,982                        | 285                    | 261                    | 1,041                  | 1,171                   | 953                   | 166           | 1,661                   | 13,679     |
| 1996              | 3,263                  | 2,949                        | 183                    | 192                    | 570                    | 849                     | 608                   | 194           | 1,279                   | 10,087     |
| 1997              | 3,228                  | 1,332                        | 165                    | 82                     | 462                    | 468                     | 475                   | 269           | 1,785                   | 8,266      |
| 1998              | 2,975                  | 1,797                        | 517                    | 495                    | 579                    | 490                     | 527                   | 150           | 589                     | 8,119      |
| 1999              | 2,482                  | 1,564                        | 530                    | 368                    | 79                     | 650                     | 1,108                 | 67            | 798                     | 7,646      |
| 2000              | 2,062                  | 2,181                        | 134                    | 123                    | 245                    | 274                     | 588                   | 0             | 954                     | 6,561      |
| 2001              | 1,753                  | 686                          | 267                    | 128                    | 70                     | 120                     | 589                   | 29            | 630                     | 4,272      |
| 2002              | 2,646                  | 928                          | 566                    | 180                    | 23                     | 370                     | 2,598                 | 62            | 537                     | 7,910      |
| 2003              | 2,132                  | 1,047                        | 575                    | 58                     | 23                     | 312                     | 1,466                 | 0             | 236                     | 5,849      |
| 2004              | 1,331                  | 819                          | 197                    | 112                    | 65                     | 73                      | 805                   | 124           | 589                     | 4,115      |
| 2005              | 1,553                  | 380                          | 59                     | 86                     | 0                      | 500                     | 432                   | 96            | 540                     | 3,646      |
| 2006              | 1,179                  | 998                          | 77                     | 8                      | 46                     | 359                     | 194                   | 137           | 298                     | 3,296      |
| 2007              | 729                    | 387                          | 138                    | 0                      | 97                     | 130                     | 840                   | 144           | 19                      | 2,484      |
| 2008              | 1,665                  | 1,431                        | 17                     | 59                     | 190                    | 34                      | 616                   | 42            | 76                      | 4,130      |
| 2009              | 1,522                  | 1,216                        | 47                     | 35                     | 0                      | 85                      | 462                   | 0             | 1,078                   | 4,445      |
| 2010              | 2,081                  | 1,850                        | 57                     | 12                     | 107                    | 90                      | 210                   | 89            | 227                     | 4,723      |
| 2011              | 532                    | 1,195                        | 0                      | 10                     | 0                      | 0                       | 14                    | 28            | 29                      | 1,808      |
| 2012              | 1,393                  | 1,335                        | 42                     | 0                      | 0                      | 710                     | 243                   | 67            | 144                     | 3,934      |
| 2013              | 436                    | 1,340                        | 0                      | 0                      | 23                     | 401                     | 1,087                 | 72            | 0                       | 3,359      |
| 2014              | 501                    | 700                          | 49                     | 0                      | 81                     | 243                     | 220                   | 0             | 77                      | 1,871      |
| Average 2009–2013 | 1,193                  | 1,387                        | 29                     | 11                     | 26                     | 257                     | 403                   | 51            | 296                     | 3,654      |
| Average 2004–2013 | 1,242                  | 1,095                        | 63                     | 32                     | 53                     | 238                     | 490                   | 80            | 300                     | 3,594      |

Table 17.—Harvest of lake trout by sport anglers fishing UCUSMA waters by drainage, 1995–2014.

| Year              | Gulkana River drainage |             |                |                         |               | Upper Susitna River drainage |              |                         |                     | Klutina River drainage | Tazlina River drainage | Other lakes and streams | Area total |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------|------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
|                   | Paxson Lake            | Summit Lake | Crosswind Lake | Other lakes and streams | Gulkana total | Lake Louise                  | Susitna Lake | Other lakes and streams | Upper Susitna total |                        |                        |                         |            |
| 1995              | 507                    | 224         | 94             | 90                      | 915           | 946                          | 200          | 419                     | 1,565               | 71                     | 0                      | 547                     | 3,098      |
| 1996              | 297                    | 120         | 339            | 336                     | 1,092         | 662                          | 381          | 306                     | 1,349               | 22                     | 11                     | 239                     | 2,713      |
| 1997              | 452                    | 158         | 96             | 142                     | 848           | 585                          | 52           | 100                     | 737                 | 33                     | 23                     | 342                     | 1,983      |
| 1998              | 205                    | 59          | 238            | 39                      | 541           | 625                          | 131          | 135                     | 891                 | 12                     | 56                     | 318                     | 1,818      |
| 1999              | 342                    | 220         | 525            | 68                      | 1,155         | 430                          | 176          | 216                     | 822                 | 35                     | 16                     | 196                     | 2,224      |
| 2000              | 228                    | 79          | 297            | 27                      | 631           | 563                          | 131          | 93                      | 787                 | 18                     | 83                     | 190                     | 1,709      |
| 2001              | 302                    | 74          | 44             | 86                      | 506           | 259                          | 110          | 118                     | 487                 | 17                     | 0                      | 235                     | 1,245      |
| 2002              | 328                    | 66          | 299            | 60                      | 753           | 458                          | 152          | 138                     | 748                 | 0                      | 122                    | 592                     | 2,215      |
| 2003              | 399                    | 102         | 403            | 104                     | 1,008         | 393                          | 128          | 80                      | 601                 | 52                     | 0                      | 193                     | 1,854      |
| 2004              | 46                     | 107         | 105            | 30                      | 288           | 770                          | 30           | 347                     | 1,147               | 14                     | 0                      | 595                     | 2,044      |
| 2005              | 50                     | 32          | 519            | 71                      | 672           | 370                          | 429          | 478                     | 1,277               | 66                     | 16                     | 323                     | 2,354      |
| 2006              | 61                     | 10          | 191            | 32                      | 294           | 200                          | 148          | 42                      | 390                 | 0                      | 0                      | 53                      | 737        |
| 2007              | 77                     | 56          | 97             | 54                      | 284           | 340                          | 61           | 0                       | 401                 | 0                      | 0                      | 279                     | 964        |
| 2008              | 173                    | 67          | 90             | 0                       | 330           | 604                          | 206          | 85                      | 895                 | 0                      | 0                      | 245                     | 1,470      |
| 2009              | 191                    | 125         | 295            | 18                      | 629           | 493                          | 217          | 230                     | 940                 | 25                     | 58                     | 223                     | 1,875      |
| 2010              | 268                    | 192         | 164            | 0                       | 624           | 697                          | 73           | 101                     | 871                 | 0                      | 54                     | 82                      | 1,631      |
| 2011              | 42                     | 37          | 50             | 36                      | 165           | 239                          | 122          | 62                      | 423                 | 0                      | 75                     | 63                      | 726        |
| 2012              | 149                    | 0           | 32             | 0                       | 181           | 169                          | 66           | 94                      | 329                 | 16                     | 0                      | 150                     | 676        |
| 2013              | 132                    | 0           | 300            | 113                     | 545           | 239                          | 108          | 35                      | 382                 | 0                      | 21                     | 148                     | 1,096      |
| 2014              | 155                    | 109         | 16             | 11                      | 291           | 278                          | 120          | 86                      | 484                 | 0                      | 0                      | 44                      | 819        |
| Average 2009–2013 | 156                    | 71          | 168            | 33                      | 429           | 367                          | 117          | 104                     | 589                 | 8                      | 42                     | 133                     | 1,201      |
| Average 2004–2013 | 119                    | 63          | 184            | 35                      | 401           | 412                          | 146          | 147                     | 706                 | 12                     | 22                     | 216                     | 1,357      |

Table 18.—Sustainable yield (Lake Area model) and harvest of lake trout from UCUSMA lakes greater than 500 ha in size.

| Lake        | Harvest <sup>a</sup> | Road accessible | Sustainable yield | Size <sup>b</sup> |
|-------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Crosswind   | 178                  | No              | 565               | Any Size          |
| Paxson      | 221                  | Yes             | 585               | Any Size          |
| Summit      | 94                   | Yes             | 413               | Any Size          |
| Tanada      | 12                   | No              | 399               | Any Size          |
| Copper      | 23                   | No              | 341               | Any Size          |
| Lake Louise | 593                  | Yes             | 848               | Any Size          |
| Susitna     | 143                  | Yes             | 439               | Any Size          |

<sup>a</sup> Average harvest from SWHS 2009–2013 plus 10% mortality factor for released fish.

<sup>b</sup> The length limit in Lake Louise, Susitna, and Crosswind lakes was removed beginning the summer of 2012.

Table 19.–Harvest of burbot by sport anglers fishing in the UCUSMA by drainage, 1995–2014.

| Year              | Gulkana River drainage |                |                      |       | Upper Susitna River drainage |                         |                      |       | Tazlina River drainage | Klutina River drainage | Other streams and lakes | Area total |
|-------------------|------------------------|----------------|----------------------|-------|------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
|                   | Paxon Lake             | Crosswind Lake | Other Gulkana waters | Total | Lake Louise                  | Susitna and Tyone lakes | Other Susitna waters | Total |                        |                        |                         |            |
| 1995              | 69                     | 271            | 7                    | 347   | 0                            | 137                     | 46                   | 183   | 126                    | 0                      | 339                     | 995        |
| 1996              | 65                     | 86             | 48                   | 199   | 0                            | 163                     | 49                   | 212   | 138                    | 0                      | 432                     | 981        |
| 1997              | 535                    | 174            | 103                  | 812   | 0                            | 262                     | 52                   | 314   | 26                     | 0                      | 206                     | 1,358      |
| 1998              | 535                    | 139            | 17                   | 691   | 0                            | 149                     | 118                  | 267   | 460                    | 0                      | 67                      | 1,485      |
| 1999              | 266                    | 503            | 13                   | 782   | 0                            | 670                     | 0                    | 670   | 117                    | 0                      | 292                     | 1,861      |
| 2000              | 291                    | 539            | 472                  | 1,302 | 0                            | 609                     | 0                    | 609   | 222                    | 0                      | 157                     | 2,290      |
| 2001              | 764                    | 173            | 122                  | 1,059 | 0                            | 154                     | 36                   | 190   | 136                    | 0                      | 121                     | 1,506      |
| 2002              | 401                    | 578            | 259                  | 1,238 | 0                            | 437                     | 31                   | 468   | 128                    | 13                     | 377                     | 2,224      |
| 2003              | 173                    | 470            | 250                  | 893   | 32                           | 119                     | 33                   | 184   | 87                     | 65                     | 228                     | 1,457      |
| 2004              | 20                     | 336            | 0                    | 356   | 317                          | 91                      | 10                   | 418   | 0                      | 0                      | 353                     | 1,127      |
| 2005              | 112                    | 859            | 94                   | 1,065 | 25                           | 74                      | 10                   | 109   | 25                     | 0                      | 175                     | 1,374      |
| 2006              | 0                      | 229            | 0                    | 229   | 210                          | 46                      | 64                   | 320   | 13                     | 13                     | 0                       | 575        |
| 2007              | 0                      | 55             | 30                   | 85    | 185                          | 30                      | 0                    | 215   | 0                      | 0                      | 277                     | 577        |
| 2008              | 40                     | 302            | 0                    | 342   | 241                          | 452                     | 17                   | 710   | 111                    | 0                      | 71                      | 1,234      |
| 2009              | 0                      | 452            | 0                    | 452   | 489                          | 237                     | 0                    | 726   | 69                     | 0                      | 1,603                   | 2,850      |
| 2010              | 166                    | 129            | 533                  | 828   | 1,231                        | 147                     | 18                   | 1,396 | 422                    | 18                     | 333                     | 2,997      |
| 2011              | 61                     | 60             | 36                   | 157   | 144                          | 36                      | 48                   | 228   | 146                    | 0                      | 25                      | 556        |
| 2012              | 33                     | 0              | 0                    | 33    | 134                          | 67                      | 104                  | 305   | 0                      | 63                     | 594                     | 995        |
| 2013              | 35                     | 421            | 18                   | 474   | 266                          | 407                     | 0                    | 673   | 83                     | 0                      | 346                     | 1,576      |
| 2014              | 0                      | 0              | 0                    | 0     | 221                          | 237                     | 0                    | 458   | 0                      | 0                      | 0                       | 458        |
| Average 2009–2013 | 59                     | 212            | 117                  | 389   | 453                          | 179                     | 34                   | 666   | 144                    | 16                     | 580                     | 1,795      |
| Average 2004–2013 | 47                     | 284            | 71                   | 402   | 324                          | 159                     | 27                   | 510   | 87                     | 9                      | 378                     | 1,386      |

Table 20.—Sport catch of wild rainbow trout by sport anglers fishing UCUSMA waters by drainage, 1995–2014.

| Year              | Gulkana River drainage <sup>a</sup> |             |                  |       | Klutina River drainage | Tazlina River drainage | Tonsina River drainage | Copper River drainage |                       | Other streams and lakes | Area total |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|-------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------|
|                   | Upper River                         | Lower River | Gulkana R. other | Total |                        |                        |                        | Upstream of Gulkana   | Downstream of Klutina |                         |            |
| 1995              | 3,397                               | 495         | 66               | 3,958 | 37                     | 0                      | 234                    | 0                     | 1,233                 | 1,247                   | 6,709      |
| 1996              | 5,140                               | 1,371       | 183              | 6,694 | 42                     | 10                     | 26                     | 0                     | 1,584                 | 2,389                   | 10,745     |
| 1997              | 7,816                               | 199         | 99               | 8,114 | 53                     | 125                    | 0                      | 218                   | 3,062                 | 4,770                   | 16,342     |
| 1998              | 3,429                               | 1,317       | 682              | 5,428 | 8                      | 48                     | 25                     | 0                     | 4,993                 | 557                     | 11,059     |
| 1999              | 5,699                               | 1,743       | 261              | 7,703 | 23                     | 108                    | 83                     | 128                   | 553                   | 1,706                   | 10,304     |
| 2000              | 5,354                               | 1,281       | 194              | 6,829 | 267                    | 0                      | 78                     | 0                     | 1,496                 | 1,622                   | 10,292     |
| 2001              | 2,806                               | 961         | 381              | 4,148 | 256                    | 0                      | 36                     | 0                     | 767                   | 1,120                   | 6,327      |
| 2002              | 5,166                               | 2,525       | 31               | 7,722 | 7                      | 0                      | 105                    | 14                    | 349                   | 1,538                   | 9,735      |
| 2003              | 5,496                               | 676         | 332              | 6,504 | 66                     | 48                     | 0                      | 0                     | 0                     | 6,188                   | 12,806     |
| 2004              | 3,995                               | 787         | 0                | 4,782 | 27                     | 26                     | 81                     | 0                     | 535                   | 761                     | 6,212      |
| 2005              | 2,967                               | 1,251       | 405              | 4,623 | 87                     | 21                     | 331                    | 0                     | 374                   | 1,422                   | 6,858      |
| 2006              | 1,361                               | 405         | 205              | 1,971 | 58                     | 741                    | 67                     | 0                     | 488                   | 465                     | 3,790      |
| 2007              | 3,173                               | 652         | 210              | 4,035 | 21                     | 0                      | 0                      | 0                     | 73                    | 124                     | 4,253      |
| 2008              | 4,183                               | 593         | 624              | 5,400 | 38                     | 0                      | 61                     | 0                     | 1,707                 | 208                     | 7,414      |
| 2009              | 3,700                               | 328         | 0                | 4,028 | 172                    | 101                    | 10                     | 0                     | 0                     | 296                     | 4,607      |
| 2010              | 3,044                               | 999         | 28               | 4,071 | 117                    | 113                    | 15                     | 0                     | 422                   | 188                     | 4,926      |
| 2011              | 1,684                               | 622         | 615              | 2,921 | 132                    | 81                     | 33                     | 0                     | 384                   | 243                     | 3,794      |
| 2012              | 1,815                               | 778         | 44               | 2,637 | 518                    | 17                     | 10                     | 0                     | 530                   | 429                     | 4,141      |
| 2013              | 2,835                               | 185         | 819              | 3,839 | 0                      | 687                    | 0                      | 13                    | 287                   | 0                       | 4,826      |
| 2014              | 1,587                               | 110         | 0                | 1,697 | 410                    | 0                      | 0                      | 196                   | 308                   | 794                     | 3,405      |
| Average 2009–2013 | 2,616                               | 582         | 301              | 3,499 | 188                    | 200                    | 14                     | 3                     | 325                   | 231                     | 4,459      |
| Average 2004–2013 | 2,876                               | 660         | 295              | 3,831 | 117                    | 179                    | 61                     | 1                     | 480                   | 414                     | 5,082      |

<sup>a</sup> The Gulkana River has been closed to the retention of rainbow trout since 1991.

Table 21.—Harvest of wild Dolly Varden by sport anglers fishing UCUSMA waters by drainage, 1995–2014.

| Year              | Klutina River drainage | Tazlina River drainage | Tonsina River drainage | Copper River drainage |                       | Other streams and lakes | Area total |
|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------|
|                   |                        |                        |                        | Upstream of Gulkana   | Downstream of Klutina |                         |            |
| 1995              | 712                    | 44                     | 500                    | 66                    | 48                    | 325                     | 1,695      |
| 1996              | 838                    | 0                      | 462                    | 1,043                 | 24                    | 208                     | 2,575      |
| 1997              | 549                    | 0                      | 107                    | 135                   | 44                    | 257                     | 1,092      |
| 1998              | 1,092                  | 16                     | 98                     | 0                     | 16                    | 367                     | 1,589      |
| 1999              | 1,818                  | 22                     | 363                    | 32                    | 45                    | 110                     | 2,390      |
| 2000              | 257                    | 0                      | 498                    | 10                    | 102                   | 77                      | 944        |
| 2001              | 644                    | 54                     | 795                    | 0                     | 11                    | 65                      | 1,569      |
| 2002              | 725                    | 0                      | 369                    | 22                    | 215                   | 57                      | 1,388      |
| 2003              | 1,009                  | 54                     | 0                      | 67                    | 20                    | 0                       | 1,150      |
| 2004              | 886                    | 0                      | 150                    | 120                   | 891                   | 106                     | 2,153      |
| 2005              | 423                    | 0                      | 82                     | 13                    | 0                     | 373                     | 891        |
| 2006              | 219                    | 0                      | 146                    | 0                     | 58                    | 150                     | 573        |
| 2007              | 362                    | 0                      | 99                     | 154                   | 15                    | 82                      | 712        |
| 2008              | 204                    | 0                      | 0                      | 22                    | 59                    | 0                       | 285        |
| 2009              | 620                    | 0                      | 93                     | 33                    | 0                     | 197                     | 943        |
| 2010              | 268                    | 0                      | 29                     | 88                    | 121                   | 132                     | 638        |
| 2011              | 64                     | 0                      | 96                     | 62                    | 9                     | 0                       | 231        |
| 2012              | 602                    | 0                      | 89                     | 0                     | 0                     | 62                      | 753        |
| 2013              | 244                    | 0                      | 460                    | 37                    | 295                   | 0                       | 1,036      |
| 2014              | 148                    | 0                      | 0                      | 0                     | 0                     | 0                       | 148        |
| Average 2009–2013 | 360                    | 0                      | 153                    | 44                    | 85                    | 78                      | 720        |
| Average 2004–2013 | 389                    | 0                      | 124                    | 53                    | 145                   | 110                     | 822        |

*Note:* Dolly Varden are not present in the Gulkana River drainage. Data do not include stocked Arctic char.

Table 22.—Stocking schedule for lakes in the UCUSMA, 2012–2014.

| Access         | Area<br>Lake    | Stocking<br>Frequency | Species     | Size          | Number stocked |        |        |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|--------|--------|
|                |                 |                       |             |               | 2013           | 2014   | 2015   |
| Glenn Hwy      | Arizona         | Annual                | Grayling    | Catchable     | 250            | 250    | 500    |
|                | Buffalo         | Annual                | Rainbow     | Catchable     | 540            | 542    | 536    |
|                | DJ              | Alternate             | Rainbow     | Fingerling    | 400            | 0      | 1,047  |
|                | Gergie          | Alternate             | Arctic Char | Fingerling    | 0              | 0      | 2,001  |
|                |                 | Alternate             | Rainbow     | Fingerling    | 9,000          | 0      | 9,005  |
|                | Little Junction | Discontinued          | Grayling    | Catchable     | 100            | 0      | 0      |
|                | Ryan            | Annual                | Arctic Char | Sub-catchable | 0              | 0      | 1,001  |
|                |                 | Annual                | Grayling    | Catchable     | 251            | 250    | 600    |
|                |                 | Annual                | Rainbow     | Catchable     | 540            | 540    | 591    |
|                | Tex Smith       | Annual                | Arctic Char | Sub-catchable | 0              | 0      | 1,003  |
|                |                 | Annual                | Rainbow     | Catchable     | 1,247          | 1,156  | 1,086  |
|                | Tolsona         | Annual                | Rainbow     | Catchable     | 1,995          | 2,017  | 1,498  |
| Richardson Hwy | Dick            | Annual                | Arctic Char | Catchable     | 508            | 500    | 0      |
|                | Pippin          | Annual                | Grayling    | Catchable     | 0              | 2,098  | 2,061  |
|                |                 | Annual                | Rainbow     | Catchable     | 5,415          | 5,429  | 4,890  |
|                | Squirrel Creek  | Annual                | Grayling    | Catchable     | 270            | 291    | 500    |
|                |                 | Annual                | Rainbow     | Catchable     | 1,429          | 1,352  | 1,350  |
| Lake Louise Rd | Connor          | Annual                | Grayling    | Catchable     | 250            | 250    | 500    |
|                | Crater          | Alternate             | Arctic Char | Fingerling    | 0              | 0      | 1,500  |
|                |                 | Alternate             | Rainbow     | Fingerling    | 0              | 2,000  | 0      |
|                | Junction        | Annual                | Grayling    | Catchable     | 400            | 500    | 1,000  |
|                | Old Road        | Annual                | Rainbow     | Catchable     | 573            | 537    | 541    |
|                | Peanut          | Alternate             | Rainbow     | Fingerling    | 0              | 1,500  | 0      |
|                | Round           | Annual                | Rainbow     | Catchable     | 570            | 575    | 601    |
| Edgerton Hwy   | Three Mile      | Annual                | Grayling    | Catchable     | 0              | 0      | 1,000  |
|                |                 | Annual                | Rainbow     | Catchable     | 1,493          | 1,463  | 1,439  |
|                | Two Mile        | Annual                | Arctic Char | Sub-catchable | 0              | 0      | 1,001  |
|                |                 | Annual                | Rainbow     | Catchable     | 2,001          | 2,005  | 2,020  |
| McCarthy Rd    | Sculpin         | Alternate             | Rainbow     | Fingerling    | 14,000         | 0      | 10,012 |
|                | Silver          | Alternate             | Rainbow     | Fingerling    | 20,000         | 0      | 19,953 |
|                |                 | Discontinued          | Rainbow     | Catchable     | 5,250          | 0      | 0      |
|                | Strelna         | Alternate             | Rainbow     | Fingerling    | 5,000          | 0      | 5,000  |
|                |                 | Alternate             | Coho        | Fingerling    | 0              | 5,000  | 0      |
| Remote         | John            | Alternate             | Arctic Char | Fingerling    | 2,000          | 0      | 2,001  |
|                | North Jans      | Alternate             | Rainbow     | Fingerling    | 0              | 9,598  | 9,598  |
|                | South Jans      | Alternate             | Rainbow     | Fingerling    | 0              | 10,003 | 0      |
|                |                 | Alternate             | Coho        | Fingerling    | 0              | 5,000  | 0      |
|                | Tolsona Mtn.    | Alternate             | Rainbow     | Fingerling    | 8,500          | 2,017  | 11,013 |



Table 23.—Effort, harvest, and catch statistics by species for stocked lakes in the UCUSMA 1995–2014.

| Year                 | Days<br>fished<br>(effort) | Catch            |                |                    |                |        |                                   | Harvest          |                |                    |                |       |
|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|--------|-----------------------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|-------|
|                      |                            | Rainbow<br>trout | Coho<br>salmon | Arctic<br>grayling | Arctic<br>char | Total  | Catch rate<br>(catch /<br>effort) | Rainbow<br>trout | Coho<br>salmon | Arctic<br>grayling | Arctic<br>char | Total |
| 1995                 | 5,441                      | 10,270           | 109            | 4,189              | 0              | 14,568 | 2.7                               | 4,252            | 42             | 804                | 0              | 5,098 |
| 1996                 | 3,759                      | 9,190            | 693            | 6,230              | 0              | 16,113 | 4.3                               | 4,000            | 414            | 726                | 0              | 5,140 |
| 1997                 | 2,160                      | 4,525            | 444            | 1,969              | 0              | 6,938  | 3.2                               | 1,677            | 274            | 570                | 0              | 2,521 |
| 1998                 | 3,346                      | 11,224           | 1039           | 1,389              | 0              | 13,652 | 4.1                               | 4,739            | 395            | 223                | 0              | 5,357 |
| 1999                 | 3,841                      | 4,505            | 309            | 4,694              | 22             | 9,530  | 2.5                               | 3,044            | 232            | 1265               | 0              | 4,541 |
| 2000                 | 3,689                      | 8,038            | 800            | 2,954              | 298            | 12,090 | 3.3                               | 2,546            | 436            | 521                | 47             | 3,560 |
| 2001                 | 4,396                      | 13,204           | 513            | 3,315              | 43             | 17,075 | 3.9                               | 1,964            | 282            | 473                | 43             | 2,762 |
| 2002                 | 2,377                      | 6,870            | 0              | 6,966              | 179            | 14,015 | 5.9                               | 2,901            | 0              | 1939               | 0              | 4,862 |
| 2003                 | 3,374                      | 4,777            | 0              | 3,309              | 495            | 8,581  | 2.5                               | 2,426            | 0              | 688                | 428            | 3,609 |
| 2004                 | 1,461                      | 6,624            | 0              | 531                | 0              | 7,155  | 4.9                               | 1,615            | 0              | 62                 | 0              | 1,677 |
| 2005                 | 2,313                      | 4,096            | 0              | 86                 | 0              | 4,182  | 1.8                               | 1,440            | 0              | 253                | 0              | 1,693 |
| 2006                 | 2,790                      | 4,125            | 0              | 232                | 357            | 4,714  | 1.7                               | 1,618            | 0              | 91                 | 204            | 1,913 |
| 2007                 | 1,974                      | 1,666            | 0              | 559                | 0              | 2,225  | 1.1                               | 573              | 0              | 282                | 0              | 855   |
| 2008                 | 1,453                      | 2,819            | 0              | 275                | 444            | 3,538  | 2.4                               | 694              | 0              | 101                | 111            | 906   |
| 2009                 | 2,254                      | 2,563            | 0              | 445                | 0              | 3,008  | 1.3                               | 1013             | 0              | 35                 | 0              | 1048  |
| 2010                 | 2,049                      | 5,044            | 31             | 208                | 73             | 5,356  | 2.6                               | 1006             | 31             | 0                  | 44             | 1081  |
| 2011                 | 3,117                      | 4,498            | 0              | 497                | 0              | 4,995  | 1.6                               | 803              | 0              | 42                 | 0              | 845   |
| 2012                 | 2,510                      | 5,155            | 0              | 610                | 0              | 5,765  | 2.3                               | 936              | 0              | 157                | 0              | 1,093 |
| 2013                 | 1,034                      | 1,149            | 0              | 518                | 0              | 1,667  | 1.6                               | 246              | 0              | 247                | 0              | 493   |
| 2014                 | 1,380                      | 1,931            | 0              | 1,280              | 0              | 3,211  | 2.3                               | 353              | 0              | 393                | 0              | 746   |
| Average<br>2009–2013 | 2,193                      | 3,682            | 6              | 456                | 15             | 4,158  | 1.9                               | 801              | 6              | 96                 | 9              | 912   |
| Average<br>2004–2013 | 2,096                      | 3,774            | 3              | 396                | 87             | 4,261  | 2.1                               | 994              | 3              | 127                | 36             | 1,160 |



## **FIGURES**

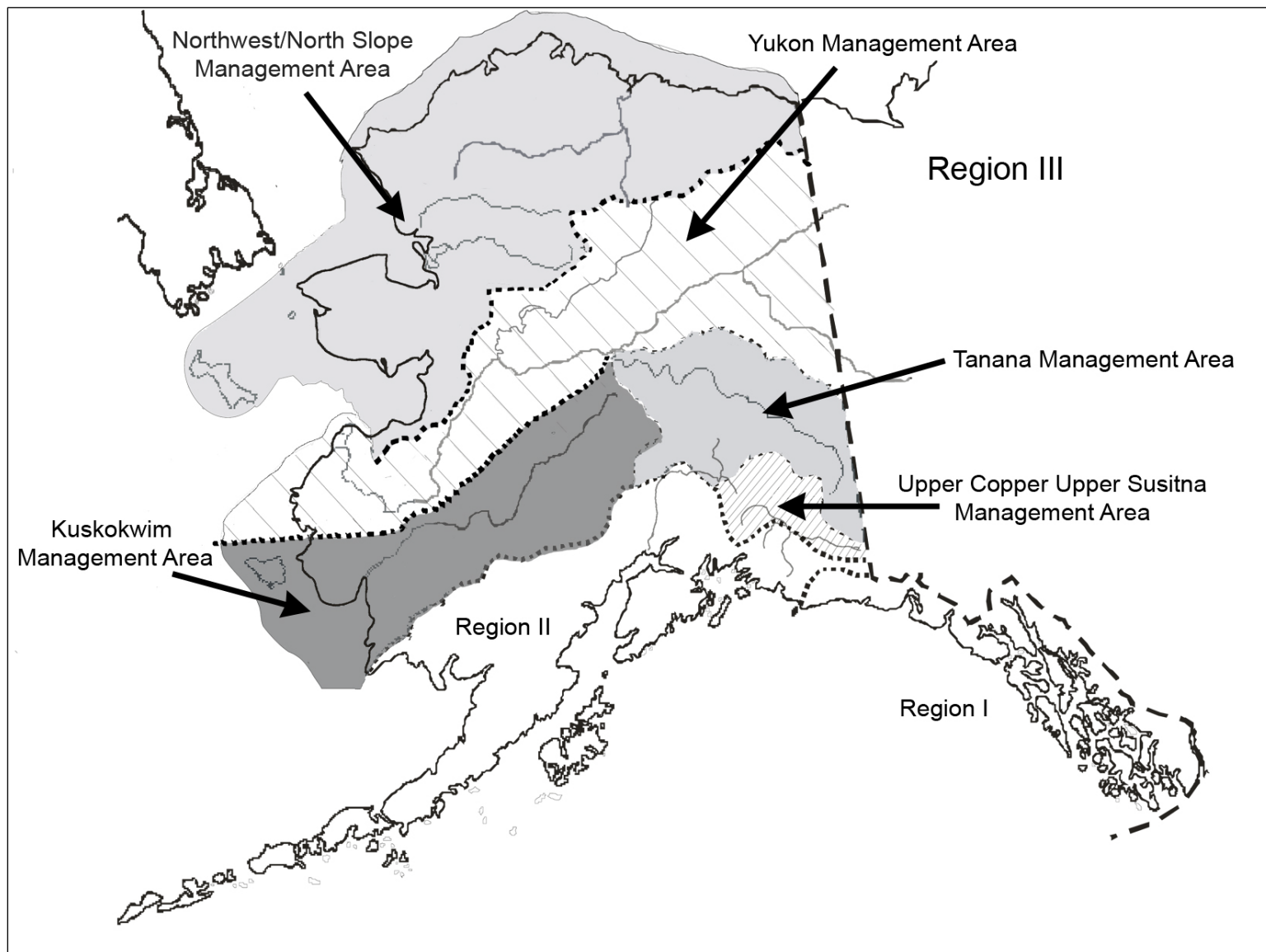


Figure 1.—Map of the sport fish regions in Alaska and the 5 Region III management areas.

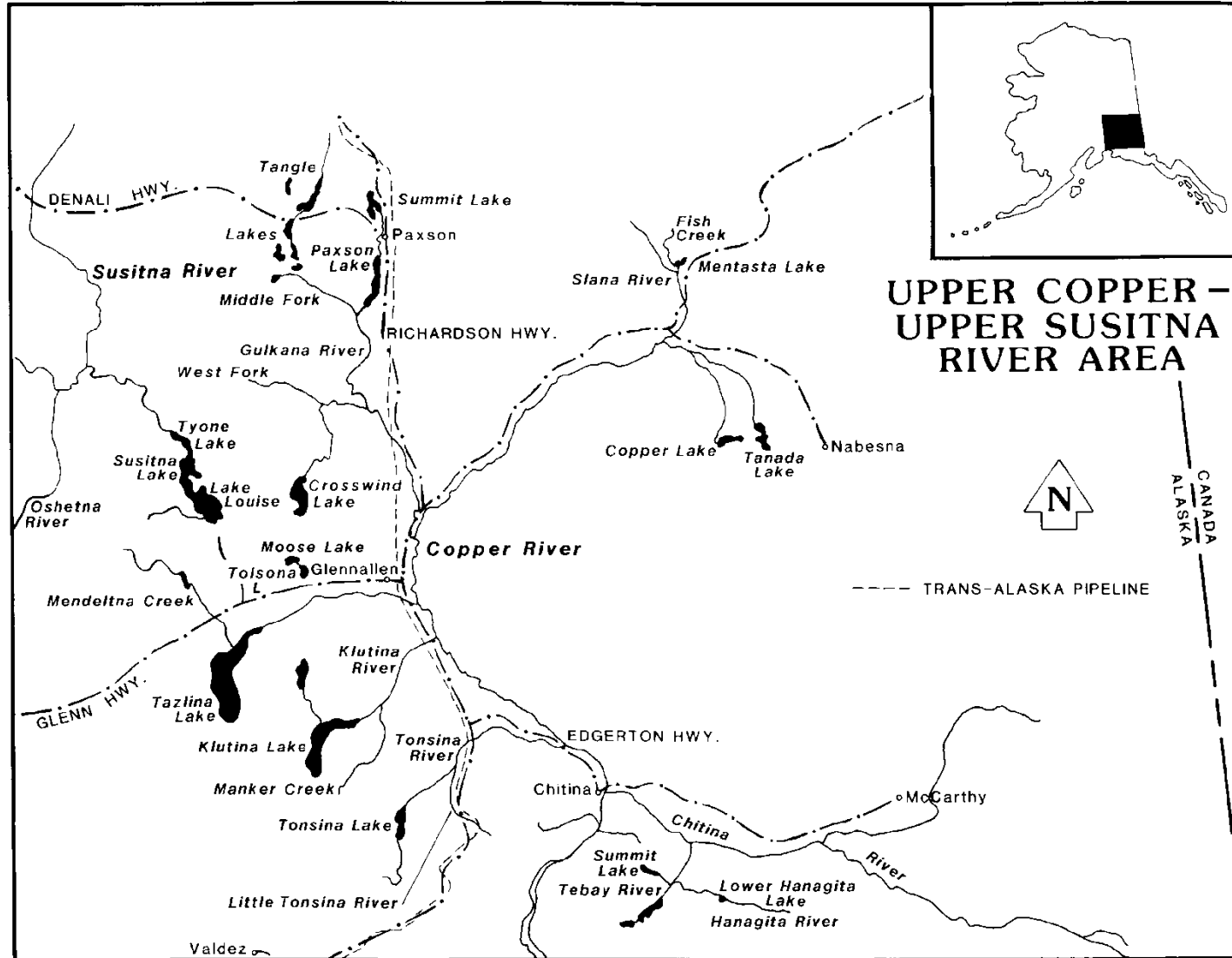


Figure 2.—The Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Management Area (UCUSMA).

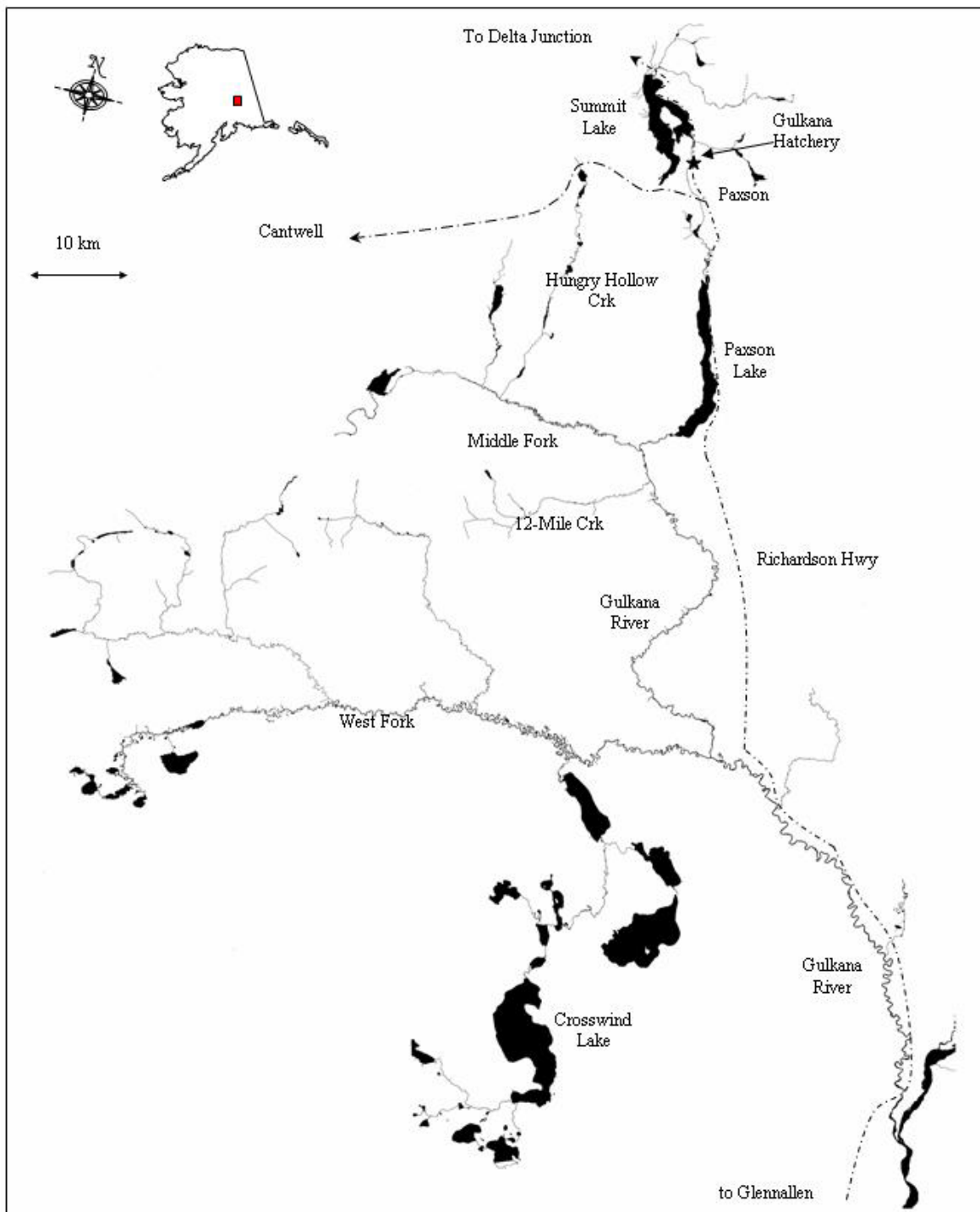


Figure 3.—Gulkana River drainage.

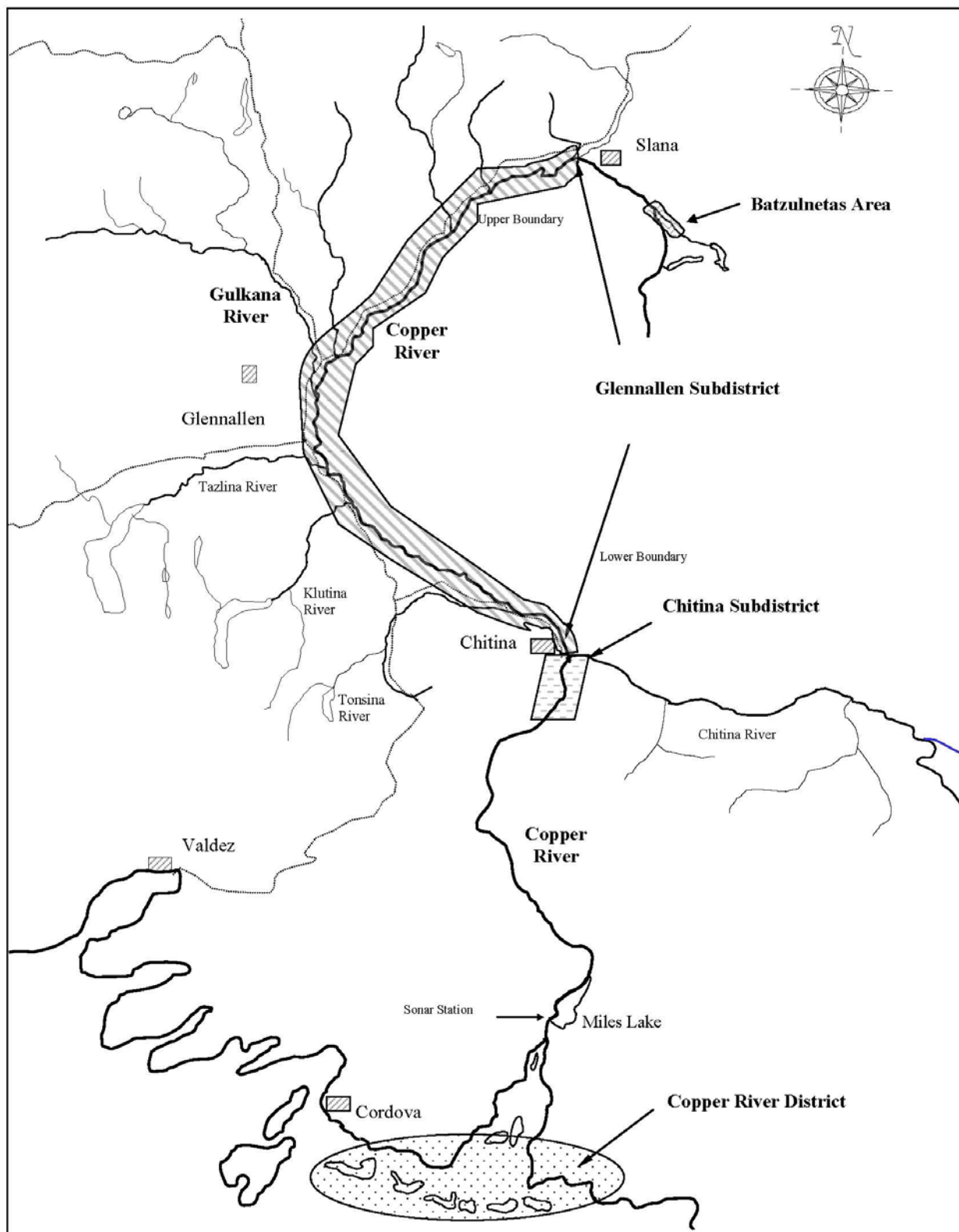


Figure 4.—Upper Copper River fishery subdistricts and areas.

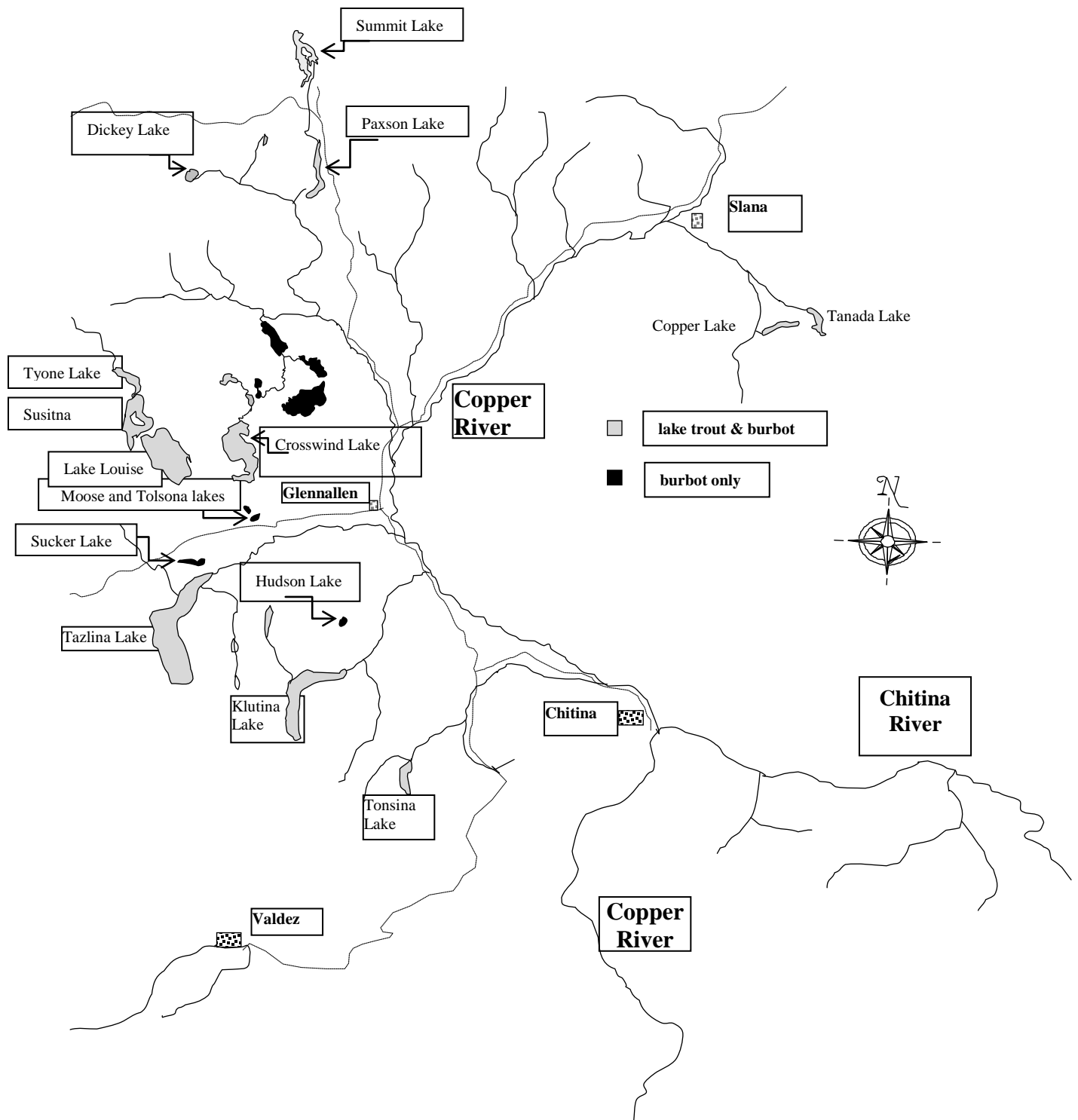


Figure 5.–Lake trout and burbot fisheries in the UCUSMA.



## **APPENDIX A**

Appendix A1.–Listing of the addresses and contact numbers for information sources regarding UCUSMA information.

| Organization                                | Address                                       | Phone          | Internet address  |
|---|---|----------------|---|
| Alaska Department of Fish and Game          |   |                | <a href="http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/">http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/</a>   |
| Glennallen Area office                      | PO Box 47<br>Glennallen, AK 99588-0047        | (907) 822-3309 | <a href="http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=ByAreaInteriorUpperCopperSusitna.main">http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=ByAreaInteriorUpperCopperSusitna.main</a> |
| Fairbanks Regional office                   | 1300 College Road<br>Fairbanks, AK 99701-1599 | (907) 459-7207 | <a href="http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=SportByAreaInterior.main">http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=SportByAreaInterior.main</a>                           |
| U.S. Bureau of Land Management              | PO Box 147<br>Glennallen, AK 99588-0147       | (907) 822-3217 | <a href="http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/fo/gdo.html">http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/fo/gdo.html</a>   |
| Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve | PO Box 439<br>Copper Center, AK 99573         | (907) 822-5234 | <a href="http://www.nps.gov/wrst/index.htm">http://www.nps.gov/wrst/index.htm</a>   |
| Ahtna, Inc                                  | PO Box 649<br>Glennallen, AK 99588-0649       | (907) 822-3476 | <a href="http://www.ahtna-inc.com">www.ahtna-inc.com</a>  |
| Chitina Native Corporation                  | PO Box 3<br>Chitina, AK 99566                 | (907) 823-2223 | <a href="http://www.chitinanative.com/corp/default.htm">http://www.chitinanative.com/corp/default.htm</a>   |
| Greater Copper Valley Chamber of Commerce   | PO Box 469<br>Glennallen, AK 99588-0469       | (907) 822-5555 | <a href="http://www.coppervalleychamber.com">http://www.coppervalleychamber.com</a>   |

## **APPENDIX B**

Appendix B1.–Emergency orders issued for UCUSMA sport, personal use, and subsistence fisheries during 2014 and 2015.

| Year | E. O. Number | Explanation   |
|------|--------------|---|
| 2014 | 3-RS-01-14   | Establishes a weekly fishing period for the Batzulnetas Area subsistence salmon fishery. The weekly fishing period will be 48-hours in duration from 12:00 noon Friday to 12:00 noon Sunday, beginning Friday, June 6, 2014. Beginning on Friday, July 4, the weekly fishing period will be increased to 84-hours in duration from 12:00 noon Friday to 11:59 P.M. Monday each week through September 1, or until closed by emergency order.  |
| 2014 | 3-RS-01-14   | Establishes the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River through August 31, 2014 and amends the schedule for the period June 7–June 8, 2014. The Chitina Subdistrict will remain closed through 11:59 p.m. Sunday, June 8, 2014. In addition, this emergency order establishes the weekly period when a supplemental permit for 10 additional sockeye salmon will be valid for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Copper River.   |
| 2014 | 3-RS-02-14   | Amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River for the period June 9–June 15, 2014. The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 9 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, June 15. In addition, this emergency order establishes the weekly period when a supplemental permit for 10 additional sockeye salmon will be valid for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Copper River.   |
| 2014 | 3-KS-06-14   | Reduces the sport fish annual limit for Chinook salmon 20 inches or more in length in the Upper Copper River drainage from 4 to 1 fish. Any Chinook salmon harvested from the Upper Copper River drainage prior to June 14 counts toward the one fish annual limit.   |
| 2014 | 3-RS-03-14   | Amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River for the period June 16–June 22, 2014. The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 16 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, June 22. In addition, this emergency order establishes the weekly period when a supplemental permit for 10 additional sockeye salmon will be valid for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Copper River. Also, this emergency order closes the Chitina Subdistrict Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery to the retention of Chinook salmon. |
| 2014 | 3-RS-04-14   | Amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River for the period June 23–June 29, 2014. The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 23 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, June 29.   |
| 2014 | 3-RS-01-14   | Liberalizes the sport fish bag and possession limit in the Copper River drainage for sockeye salmon 16 inches or longer. Beginning at 12:01 a.m., Saturday, June 23, the limit for sockeye salmon in the Copper River drainage is six fish per day, six in possession.  |
| 2014 | 3-RS-05-14   | Amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River for the period June 30– July 6, 2014. The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 30 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, July 6.  |

-continued-

| Year | E. O. Number | Explanation  |
|------|--------------|--|
| 2014 | 3-RS-06-14   | Amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River for the period July 7–13, 2014. The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, July 7 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, July 13. In addition, this emergency order establishes the weekly period when a supplemental permit for 10 additional sockeye salmon will be valid for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Copper River.       |
| 2014 | 3-RS-07-14   | Amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River for the period July 14–20, 2014. The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, July 14 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, July 20. In addition, this emergency order establishes the weekly period when a supplemental permit for 10 additional sockeye salmon will be valid for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Copper River.     |
| 2014 | 3-RS-08-14   | Amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River for the period July 21–27, 2014. The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, July 21 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, July 27.   |
| 2014 | 3-RS-09-14   | Amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River for the period July 28–August 3, 2014. The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, July 28 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, August 3.  |
| 2014 | 3-RS-10-14   | Amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River for the period August 4–10, 2014. The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, August 4 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, August 10. In addition, this emergency order establishes the weekly period when a supplemental permit for 10 additional sockeye salmon will be valid for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Copper River. |
| 2014 | 3-RS-11-14   | Amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River for the period August 11–31, 2014. The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, August 11 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, August 31.   |
| 2015 | 3-RS-01-15   | Establishes a weekly fishing period for the Batzulnetas Area subsistence salmon fishery. The weekly fishing period will be 48-hours in duration from 12:00 noon Friday to 12:00 noon Sunday, beginning Friday, June 5, 2015. Beginning on Friday, July 3, the weekly fishing period will be increased to 84-hours in duration from 12:00 noon Friday to 11:59 P.M. Monday each week through September 1, or until closed by emergency order.   |
| 2015 | 3-RS-01-15   | Establishes the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River through August 31, 2015 and opens the Chitina Subdistrict for a 24-hour period from 12:01 a.m. Sunday June 7 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, June 7.  |

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| Year | E. O. Number | Explanation  |
|------|--------------|--|
| 2015 | 3-RS-02-15   | Amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River for the period June 8–June 14, 2015. The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 8 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, June 14.        |
| 2015 | 3-RS-03-15   | Amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River for the period June 15–June 21, 2015. The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 15 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, June 21.      |
| 2015 | 3-RS-04-15   | Amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River for the period June 22–June 28, 2015. The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 22 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, June 28.      |
| 2015 | 3-RS-01-15   | Liberalizes the sport fish bag and possession limit in the Copper River drainage for sockeye salmon 16 inches or longer. Beginning at 12:01 a.m., Saturday, June 20, the limit for sockeye salmon in the Copper River drainage is six fish per day, six in possession. |
| 2015 | 3-RS-05-15   | Amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River for the period June 29– July 5, 2015. The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 29 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, July 5.       |
| 2015 | 3-RS-06-15   | Amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River for the period July 6–12, 2015. The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, July 6 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, July 12.             |
| 2015 | 3-RS-07-15   | Amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River for the period July 13–19, 2015. The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, July 13 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, July 19.           |
| 2015 | 3-RS-08-15   | Amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River for the period July 20–26, 2015. The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, July 20 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, July 26.           |
| 2015 | 3-RS-09-15   | Amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River for the period July 27–August 2, 2015. The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, July 27 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, August 2.    |
| 2015 | 3-RS-10-15   | Amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River for the period August 3–31, 2015. The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, August 3 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, August 31.       |

## **APPENDIX C**

Appendix C1.–Federal subsistence permits and harvest from the Copper River, Chitina Subdistrict, 2003–2014.

| Year                 | Permits issued | Permits returned | Species harvested |         |      |           |       |
|----------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|---------|------|-----------|-------|
|                      |                |                  | Chinook           | Sockeye | Coho | Steelhead | Other |
| 2003                 | 100            | 82               | 18                | 717     | 70   | 0         | 0     |
| 2004                 | 111            | 83               | 7                 | 1,215   | 18   | 0         | 0     |
| 2005                 | 76             | 64               | 51                | 2,450   | 0    | 0         | 0     |
| 2006                 | 75             | 62               | 18                | 1,549   | 20   | 0         | 0     |
| 2007                 | 97             | 86               | 28                | 1,028   | 41   | 0         | 0     |
| 2008                 | 82             | 70               | 23                | 959     | 100  | 0         | 0     |
| 2009                 | 68             | 62               | 9                 | 882     | 11   | 0         | 0     |
| 2010                 | 92             | 79               | 18                | 2,324   | 30   | 0         | 0     |
| 2011                 | 85             | 68               | 13                | 1,933   | 10   | 0         | 0     |
| 2012                 | 92             | 80               | 5                 | 915     | 8    | 8         | 0     |
| 2013                 | 99             | 85               | 18                | 2,252   | 8    | 2         | 10    |
| 2014                 | 113            | 103              | 14                | 1,664   | 69   | 10        | 0     |
| Average<br>2009–2013 | 87             | 75               | 13                | 1,661   | 13   | 2         | 2     |
| Average<br>2004–2013 | 88             | 74               | 19                | 1,551   | 25   | 1         | 1     |

*Note:* Reported harvest only 2003–2004; expanded harvest (including estimated harvest from non-returned permits) 2005–2014.



## **APPENDIX D**

Appendix D1.–Federal subsistence permits and harvest from the Copper River, Glennallen Subdistrict, 2003–2014.

| Year              | Permits issued | Permits returned | Species harvested |         |      |           |       |
|-------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|---------|------|-----------|-------|
|                   |                |                  | Chinook           | Sockeye | Coho | Steelhead | Other |
| 2003              | 221            | 184              | 554               | 13,616  | 152  | 5         | 0     |
| 2004              | 262            | 206              | 636               | 17,704  | 152  | 12        | 0     |
| 2005              | 275            | 224              | 389               | 21,927  | 187  | 0         | 41    |
| 2006              | 254            | 220              | 460               | 18,346  | 28   | 15        | 71    |
| 2007              | 281            | 238              | 663               | 17,624  | 57   | 9         | 122   |
| 2008              | 270            | 219              | 837               | 14,475  | 229  | 26        | 52    |
| 2009              | 274            | 227              | 543               | 13,668  | 34   | 19        | 110   |
| 2010              | 269            | 236              | 326               | 14,137  | 81   | 42        | 62    |
| 2011              | 277            | 240              | 743               | 15,753  | 223  | 5         | 317   |
| 2012              | 271            | 244              | 415               | 16,487  | 173  | 42        | 106   |
| 2013              | 274            | 236              | 374               | 17,060  | 21   | 7         | 88    |
| 2014              | 314            | 279              | 420               | 23,034  | 29   | 10        | 59    |
| Average 2009–2013 | 273            | 237              | 480               | 15,421  | 106  | 23        | 137   |
| Average 2004–2013 | 271            | 229              | 539               | 16,718  | 119  | 18        | 97    |

*Note:* Reported harvest only 2003–2004; expanded harvest (estimates include harvest from non-returned permits) 2005–2014.